



US Army Corps of Engineers



US Army Corps of Engineers Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012

The Human Capital Imperative

These are historic times for the Nation, Army and Corps of Engineers! If we are to go from Good-to-Great, it will be because we have GREAT people-talented, disciplined, competent, and professional- who deliver now and shape the future.

Our Country is relying on us more than ever to deliver. The key to "Building Strong" lies in the strength of our workforce in every discipline and the "bench" for the future.

Each of you will play an important role in the success of this plan and the plan is critical to the Corps' success and its future. Only through our combined and synchronized efforts will we achieve our goal of becoming the GREAT Corps the Army and Nation deserve!

BUILDING STRONG

Best,

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Executive Summary

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is Building Strong. In order to do so we must have a workforce engaged in disciplined thought and action. People are the key to accomplishing our mission and attaining our vision.

Today's environment is volatile with changing demands and uncertainties. However, one constant is that the Nation and the Army expect more and more from USACE, from Overseas Contingency Operations to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), and Grow the Army programs. The Nation expects protection from the elements in the Gulf Coast and immediate and robust response to natural disasters throughout the country – and we must answer to Congress for these projects and needs. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 has just been passed and USACE will be asked to make a number of investments in the infrastructure, providing jobs to many Americans. Leadership plays a critical role in developing and retaining a top notch workforce, yet their jobs at USACE have become more and more complicated and time consuming in step with an exponential increase in operational tempo the past two years, but we have not given leaders the tools to meet these challenges at a time when the demands for effective human capital management are increasing.

The Corps has developed a USACE Campaign Plan (CP), tied directly to the Army Campaign Plan (ACP). Our efforts in Human Capital will directly support all ACP Goals by enabling military programs, civil works, real estate, and the myriad of other programs to be successful and will support the Department of Defense Human Capital Plan (HCP). The CP contains three objectives that demonstrate the importance of Human Capital to the organization. Full implementation of these CP objectives will result in human capital programs, systems and tools that set conditions for our leaders and employees to achieve their full potential.

The Corps has developed the USACE Campaign Plan (CP), tied directly to the Army Campaign Plan (ACP). Our efforts in Human Capital will directly support all ACP Goals by enabling military programs, civil works, real estate, and the myriad of other programs to be successful and will support the Department of Defense Human Capital Plan (HCP). The CP contains three objectives that demonstrate the importance of Human Capital to the organization. Full implementation of these CP objectives will result in human capital programs, systems and tools that set conditions for our leaders and employees to achieve their full potential.

In the past, we have operated in a decentralized way in our human capital programs and policies. We have demonstrated that we can “make do” with this system, but in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must think and act more globally. Our competition, other Federal agencies and large corporations, have already realized the significance of this shift. Human Capital in the Corps must be managed corporately to build a new culture for USACE – we must have a national holistic strategy for hiring, developing, placing and evaluating our people. We cannot begin to turn the flywheel when we work in individual microcosms of Districts, Labs and MSCs, focusing only on

“our” work and “our” people. We have to be able to identify the best and the brightest, bring them into the Corps to do meaningful work, offer them assignments that will grow them as leaders and as technical experts, and place them in the right jobs as they progress.

The five goals selected that will carry us into the future are listed below. A full listing of the planned actions and strategies for each goal are set forth in the Schedules and Milestones section and provide a succinct, full and important capsule of all the initiatives included in this plan. For each goal, we have identified barriers, actions that have been taken to date, planned strategies and actions, and metrics that will demonstrate our progress.

Goal 1: Recruit a diverse workforce to meet technical and leadership competencies

As of 30 September 2008, USACE had 32,531 employees on board, and a need to grow the workforce by approximately 3000 to meet its current requirements – approximately 2000 of which must be engineers. As of the writing of this document, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has been passed and promises to bring additional work to the Corps, primarily requiring additional construction management and contracting staff. With turnover, we must fill a total of 5400 new positions in the Corps in the next year. Some of the barriers that USACE faces in recruitment are that our recruitment efforts have not been focused; there has been a lack of emphasis on corporate workforce planning and recruiting; Federal, DoD, Army and USACE hiring processes are inefficient and ineffective; and leaders lack an understanding of processes and flexibilities and are averse to risk.

Selected actions that USACE will take in the enhancement of recruitment revolve around first, the development of District and Center HCPs that must include sound workforce plans, based on the five goals contained in this HCP. Plans will include hiring at all levels, from intern to senior leaders, to meet future requirements, including deployment. Additionally, we will take aggressive action to make the slow and cumbersome hiring process more efficient and effective. We will corporately examine resource requirements that will allow us to attract and retain the best and brightest.

Goal 2. Manage performance to achieve excellence

The USACE Vision – “A GREAT engineering force of highly disciplined people working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the Nation’s engineering challenges” – requires a workforce that is ready to perform, and focused on results. In order for employees to be focused, they must all understand their place in the organization and how they contribute to the mission, vision, and goals and objectives. USACE has three performance management systems: NSPS (approximately 12,000 positions); The Army Personnel Evaluation System (TAPES) and Lab Demo. The first priority for this goal is to ensure that employees clearly understand what superior performance is and how that work supports the mission – through the use of good, well defined objectives that link to the mission. The second priority is to provide regular and valuable feedback to employees so that they

understand how their accomplishments contribute to the organization in its quest for greatness.

USACE has been able to successfully convert over 12,000 employees to NSPS since 2006, and completed a program evaluation that contributed to consistency in ratings across the command in the next rating cycle. To continue our improvement into the future, leaders at all levels must embrace the requirement to link performance objectives to the Campaign Plan goals and objectives, and to the MSC and District Implementation and Operational Plans. They must also fully support the development of measurable performance objectives. These commitments must become part of regular leader discussions, and other venues such as town halls – and be inculcated into the culture of the organization. USACE will continue to take practical steps to improve its application of NSPS and TAPES processes, to reduce the cultural differences between the two, align performance objectives to the mission and campaign plan, and use both to make meaningful distinctions in performance.

Goal 3: Develop employees corporately

USACE has long recognized the importance of learning. Our initial learning doctrine was published in November, 2003. Since that time we have continued to build a strong learning foundation as well as the expectation that USACE employees will be life long learners. Recently, the Corps has also recognized that while we have placed much emphasis on leader development, a greater focus on technical development is now required. But more importantly, while we have been successful in training individuals, we have not taken a strategic approach to development of our workforce. The absence of a corporate model and program for training and development detracts from our ability to evolve as a learning organization.

The National Technical Competency Team (NTCT) is evaluating USACE's future mission and workload, the role technical competencies and positions will play in execution of the mission, and how USACE should be organized to deliver those services. The NTCT will also develop short term and long term strategies, processes and metrics to sustain the evaluation of technical competencies. Another model program is the USACE Learning Center (ULC), located in Huntsville, Alabama, that was established over 30 years ago meet the unique developmental and training needs of USACE.

USACE must now assess its current and future standing with regard to corporate workforce development. We must be able to establish a corporate culture and program to develop the workforce, and apply a strategic view to identify the projects in our inventory that will develop our future competencies; recommend a percentage of labor costs that should be dedicated to annual workforce development, including travel and labor; and examine needed changes in corporate policies like emerging leader and leader development programs.

Goal 4: Retain the workforce of the future

Turnover is low in USACE – approximately 7-8%, depending on location and job series. The current economy and rising unemployment rate (8.1% as of February, 2009) is expected to create an environment where we can more readily fill positions and retain our valued employees in the short term.

Our aging workforce reflects a larger percentage of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers than found in DoD or other federal agencies, so we are retaining the skills we need now – but may be in trouble for the future when they retire, because our pipeline of new talent is not equivalent in size to the retirement eligible population. Retention of Generation X and Generation Y requires new thinking and flexibilities in management and leadership – our current X and Y employees that will be our future senior workforce will almost surely require more concentrated attention. These changes and associated challenges can only be met through a corporate view of retention.

USACE has taken very few actions that specifically address retention. The Corps must begin action to plan for retention of the right competencies for the future workforce, in consideration of the work design being developed as part of the NTCS. USACE must first understand the workforce of the future and the competencies required in order to address retention needs accurately, and we must understand the issues contributing to turnover and retention, to include the national economic environment, changes in generational expectations, workforce forecasts to include expected retirement in the out years, workload projections, and workforce satisfaction – and their effect on the Corps' future workforce. We will undertake a study to learn more to inform our efforts, and identify interim measures to be taken while the study is being completed.

Goal 5. Build strong families.

The Army entered into the Army Family Covenant with the Families of its Soldiers and places great value on our Families, recognizing them as the key to readiness and retention. At any point in time, USACE has approximately 800-1000 team members deployed around the globe, in 33 countries. In order to support this expeditionary workforce and provide for readiness and retention, the Corps will create family support programs that provide incentives to and care for families of employees who deploy to support Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) and disasters that the Corps is engaged in. The USACE Family Readiness (FR) Program will seek to mitigate family related areas that serve as detractors to deployment.

This program is just getting off the ground in USACE – recently, we established a mission statement, formed an Executive Steering Group to provide program advisory services and oversight, and hired a FR Program Manager in February 2009 to lead program efforts. We have also established partnerships with the Army, DoD, Army Materiel Command, and State Department in order to share ideas and build stronger programs that can serve as models for other agencies, and are participating in an interagency forum on family programs for civilians. At local levels, many Districts and

Divisions have begun grassroots FR programs and in some cases, resourced them and hired staff. We participated in the Army Family Action Program for the first time in ten years.

Our goals for the FR program are to: Institutionalize a sustainable level of funding, staff, technology and other support for the FR Network; Establish USACE standard service requirements with additional augmentation at Division/Districts/Centers; and Establish an effective Communication Process between employees, families, and USACE.

Conclusion.

Time to fill jobs in USACE is already on the rise. FY 2008 time to fill was 47 days; during the first quarter of FY 2009, it increased to 49 days. During January 2009, it was at 56 days and February 2009, 51 days. As we put additional emphasis on hiring more people, without any change in methods and practices, we must expect this trend to continue. The number of unfilled positions will increase, resulting in a shortage of personnel across USACE, particularly in the MCOs. And, that means we will not be able to get the work done – not the work of the Nation, not the work of the Army, and not the work we expect our leaders to accomplish to develop and manage our workforce. The lack of leadership in conjunction with a turn in the economy will result in lower retention that will contribute to the inability to do the work. The result will be a downward spiral in productivity and staffing.

We have laid out the case for change in this discussion and in the strategies we believe must be addressed. We must recognize that completion of individual actions may not fully satisfy the need for a corporate strategy that knits together the goals cohesively and enables us to effectively hire, move, develop, and utilize people to get the mission done.

Introduction

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is Building Strong. In order to do so we must have a workforce engaged in disciplined thought and action. People are the key to accomplishing our mission and attaining our vision.

Mission

Provide vital public engineering services in peace and war to strengthen our Nation's security, energize the economy, and reduce risks from disasters.

Vision

A GREAT engineering force of highly disciplined people working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the Nation's engineering challenges.

Human Capital Environment

USACE mission

Today's environment in the nation is volatile with changing demands and uncertainties. However, one constant is that the Nation and the Army expect more and more from USACE. The Overseas Contingency Operations require our service in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other Middle Eastern countries. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), and Grow the Army programs levy requirements on USACE for large construction projects on posts, camps and stations across the U.S. The Nation expects protection from the elements in the Gulf Coast and immediate and robust response to natural disasters throughout the country – and we must answer to Congress for these projects and needs. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 has just been passed and USACE will be asked to make a number of investments in the infrastructure, providing jobs to many Americans. Overall, USACE project spending is forecast to grow from a historical base of \$6B to over \$28B in FY09/10 as supported by the following detail.

Our Military Programs mission area is facing the largest workload since World War II, and BRAC requires that between FY06 and 2011, USACE will manage an Army military construction program totaling \$40 billion. Military construction will peak in FY10 and FY11 at approximately \$12 billion per year. This \$40 billion program translates into high-quality projects for service members and their families, including 125 child development centers accommodating nearly 20,000 children; 112 Armed Forces Reserve Centers or Army Reserve Centers; permanent barracks housing approximately 56,000 Soldiers as well as training barracks serving more than 31,000 Soldiers; nearly 4,000 family housing units; approximately 2,000 acres of military equipment parking and motor pool space; 13 Brigade Combat Team complexes; and 130 ranges.

The BRAC program is spread throughout the continental US (CONUS). In addition to BRAC, we are executing the Korean Transformation Program (KTP), and the Japan Host

Nation Funded Construction Program (JHNFPC). Just in the South Atlantic Division of the Corps of Engineers, we are managing more than 120 BRAC projects totaling about \$3 billion in the southeast United States. In the southwest, our Southwestern Division is managing military construction at Fort Bliss, Texas, averaging \$10 million per week - this translates to one building delivered every week for the next five years. In the Pacific Ocean Division (POD), the overall program is growing from \$2.1 billion in FY07 to almost \$4 billion in FY10, including 780 housing units for Alaska during the next two years and continuing the massive construction underway at Camp Humphreys, Korea. In this Division, the excessive time to fill is jeopardizing our ability to fulfill our BRAC, Korea Transformation Program (KTP), and Defense Policy Review Initiative (DRPI) missions. The KTP, a \$10.4 billion program, is based on international agreements and failure is not an option. In total, POD is tasked with executing a program of over \$20 billion in host nation construction over the next five to eight years.

Civil Works and ARRA: The \$787 billion stimulus plan became law on 17 Feb 2009. The goals of ARRA are to preserve and create jobs and to invest in transportation, environmental protection, and other infrastructure that provide long-term economic benefits. The USACE portion of ARRA is projected to increase workloads in all eight USACE non-OCO Divisions. ARRA will result in an additional \$4.6 billion in Civil Works projects; \$1.4 billion in military operations (not including Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization [SRM] funds); and, at least \$0.9 billion from partner Federal agencies. Although no agreements have yet been reached, USACE has also been approached by other Federal agencies to execute their ARRA construction projects; for example, construction of Veterans Affairs health care facilities. The spending program will increase Division work loads considerably, in some as much as 28 percent. In order for USACE to effectively execute the increased workload and to meet ARRA goals of efficient and transparent award and use of funds, we must have the right number of people in the right places with the right skills to get the job done.

In addition to the traditional mission of acquiring, managing, and disposing of real property interests on behalf of the Department of the Army and providing real estate support for other military services and Federal agencies, between FY09 and FY11, USACE Real Estate operations will execute over \$1.25 billion in support of the Department of Defense as executive agent for the Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP), the Defense National Relocation Program (DNRP) and the Joint Forces Recruiter Leasing Program. A revision to the authorizing legislation to execute the HAP was included as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This revision also included an additional \$555 million for the HAP which will provide partial financial relief to relocating military service member and civilian employee homeowners who are being relocated as a result of BRAC and are not able to sell their homes under reasonable terms and conditions due to market declines in real estate. As financial markets continue to change, we will continue to find innovative ways to utilize the Real Property Exchange Program, Enhanced Use Leasing, and Military Construction Exchange authorities to leverage Army property value into operations and maintenance services as well as construction projects.

USACE workforce

The USACE workforce of 32,531 (as of Sept. 08) is a strong cadre of highly experienced personnel with long service records. This “deep bench” of experience is well matched to the complexity and variety of projects that the USACE completes in order to fulfill its mission. The USACE workforce is also diverse. The number of minorities in our workforce is increasing but our numbers are below the distribution contained in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF).

Diversity

FY	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Total Minority*	Non-Minority
2008	1,014	3,407	338	1,327	6,386	26,142
2007	1,031	3,340	359	1,293	6,189	24,978
2006	1,093	3,320	367	1,308	6,159	25,265

*Includes minorities not listed separately in this table.

Note: Some employees do not identify their race/ethnicity.

Table E-1

Diversity

FY	Total Employees		Hispanic or Latino		Black or African American		Asian		American Indian or Alaskan Native	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
2008										
USACE	68.05%	31.94%	1.87%	1.18%	4.99%	5.18%	2.58%	1.40%	.65%	.39%
CLF	51.50%	48.50%	2.50%	2.10%	14.30%	17.70%	1.20%	.80%	.20%	.20%

Table E-2

With this strength and experience come two future liabilities. First, 17% of the workforce is retirement eligible today. While the number of retirements has increased from 1,168 in 2006 to 1,402 in 2008, it is expected that the number will accelerate upon improvement in the overall U.S. economy. Secondly, USACE is under-represented in the “Generation Y” demographic (born 1977 – 1989) and “Millennials” (born 1990 to present) when compared to DoD and National statistics.

	2008 age	USACE (Sep 08)	
		Workforce	% of Workforce
Silent Generation (born before 1946)	>=63	1,563	4.93%
Baby Boomers (1946 - 1964)	44-62	19,892	62.73%
Generation X (1965 - 1976)	32-43	6,199	19.55%
Generation Y (1977 - 1989)	19-31	3,969	12.52%
Millennium (1990 - Present)	<= 18	88	0.28%
		31,711	100.00%

All (FEDSCOPE Sep 08*)

DoD (FEDSCOPE Sep 08*)

Workforce	% of Workforce	Workforce	% of Workforce
16,812	2.45%	56,407	2.91%
403,777	58.73%	1,070,282	55.20%
192,555	28.01%	600,501	30.97%
70,014	10.18%	202,198	10.43%
4,402	0.64%	9,432	0.49%
687,560	100.00%	1,938,820	100.00%

Table E-3

Retirements

Retirement eligibility in USACE is reaching alarming levels. As of September, 2008, 17% of our employees are eligible for optional retirement. If nothing changes in the workforce, 34% of our employees will be retirement eligible in September, 2012. Even more concerning is that retirement rates for our Mission Critical Occupations (MCO) – those that are the backbone of our organization – shown in Chart E-1 – reach as high as 43% for Engineering Technicians in FY12. USACE has not previously focused on the impact of this retirement eligibility but must do so now.

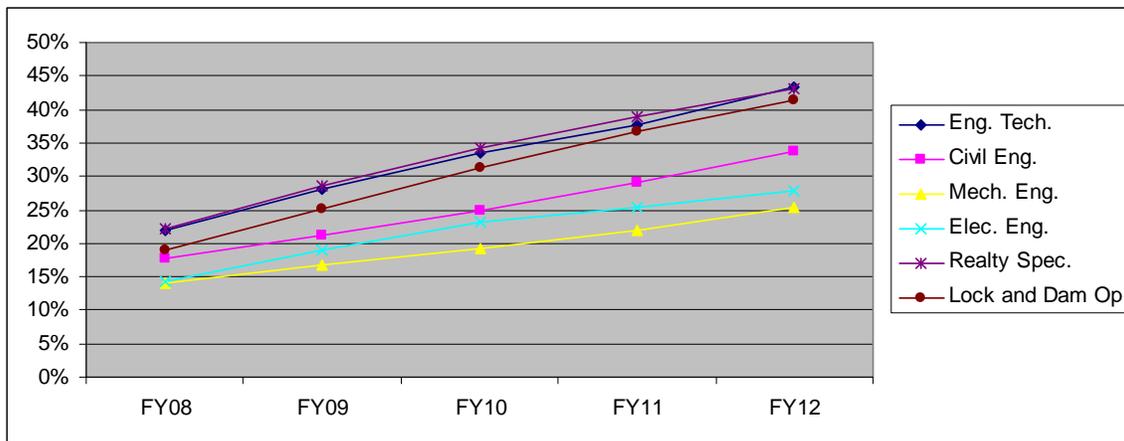


Chart E-1

Recruiting

Recruiting the right talent to meet these challenges and projected workload is critical to the success of USACE. Yet, it has become more difficult to fill jobs due to a decreasing supply of available candidates, competition with other Federal Agencies and the bureaucracy of the federal hiring process. The available supply of candidates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is shrinking. While postsecondary enrollment has increased over the past decade, the proportion of students obtaining degrees in STEM fields has fallen. In academic year 1994-1995, about 519,000 students obtained STEM degrees, about 32 percent of all degrees awarded. More students—approximately 578,000—obtained STEM degrees in academic year 2003-2004, but such degrees accounted for only 27 percent of those awarded. While the number of degrees obtained in some STEM fields increased, the number of degrees obtained in engineering, biological science, and certain technical fields declined. College and university officials

and students cited subpar teacher quality at the high school and college levels, poor high school preparation, more rigorous and expensive degree requirements for STEM majors, and lower pay of STEM occupations relative to such fields as law and business as factors that discouraged students from pursuing degrees in STEM fields.¹ The nation as a whole faces a potential crisis in being able to fill its needs for these positions in the future. It is estimated that the U.S. needs 400,000 new graduates in STEM fields each year with bachelor's degrees alone. In the past decade the number of STEM bachelor's degrees awarded annually has been slightly below 200,000.² The Corps relies heavily on these occupations – in fact, our MCOs are primarily engineers and are an absolute must to meeting our mission. The job market is changing – until very recently, it was immensely competitive and difficult to fill engineering and scientist positions. Now, we are beginning to see improvements in our capability to fill positions in some markets as we are in the midst of the economic crisis and unemployment rates are rising (8.1% as of February, 2009). An additional challenge, however, is that the recruitment goal for USACE has increased significantly from last year's net increase to strength of approximately 1,400 new employees to a potential requirement for nearly 4,500 new hires for the current FY (at the time of this writing, there are 3,520 USACE recruit actions in the hands of the Civilian Human Resources Agency for fill). The Federal recruitment process remains ineffective and inefficient and as a result, can be very frustrating for job candidates to endure. It is traditionally designed to satisfy risk aversion and provide internal policy safeguards, and as a result is slow and bureaucratic. The cycle time to fill jobs is too long and there are too many requirements that prevent speedy fills. A faster process with more flexibility at the hiring manager level will be needed to compete for candidates in the future when the economy improves – even if it is associated with a higher level of risk. Finally, recruitment is highly decentralized in USACE and follows the typical federal government model. Only limited national level recruitment efforts have been undertaken in the past, in partnership with national diversity groups. As a result, USACE has no cohesive recruitment strategy or effort that concentrates resources and makes use of national level advertising, marketing, or recruiting.

Leadership challenge: managing work and growing demands for managing people

Leadership plays a critical role in developing and retaining a top notch workforce – and these leadership jobs at USACE have become more and more complicated and time consuming in step with an exponential increase in operational tempo the past two years. We already know anecdotally that supervisors in USACE are spending greater amounts of time in non-leadership functions to keep the organizations afloat because of heavy workload. Add to that the presence of multiple generations in the workplace that bring complexity to the leadership experience –generational trends suggest that organizations need to make greater investments in mentoring and development of college graduates to attract and retain them. Not only do supervisors need to know how to work with people like themselves, but with those that have very different expectations and needs. Additionally, supervisors may have multiple personnel systems to work within – General

¹ GAO, *Higher Education: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Trends and the Role of Federal Programs*, GAO-06-702T (Washington, D.C.: May 3, 2006)

² Tapping America's Potential: Progress Report 2008

Schedule, Laboratory Demonstration, Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System, National Security Personnel System, and Wage Board are a few. Leaders lack training in human resources programs and flexibilities, workforce planning, or making data driven decisions, and as a result they tend to be less skilled in managing people, more risk averse, and overly cautious in their actions. Workforce planning is not consistently defined and has not been prioritized at a high level in the command until recently. Many of our valued employees are nearing retirement decisions and supervisors need to plan to build the bench to replace them – but without a strong framework for succession planning. Many supervisors are faced with the added stress of managing short term emergency operations in the continental US (CONUS) and outside CONUS (OCONUS), or releasing employees from their home assignments with the requirement to continue to meet the home mission. Not only must they make these sacrifices, they must actively encourage the deployment of their team members or solicit team members to work with them in war zones. In summary, the supervisor's job, which is already a difficult one, is becoming more demanding, and we have not given leaders the tools to meet these challenges at a time when the demands for effective human capital management are increasing.

Human Capital and talent management are critical topics for USACE as we look to the future. In September 2008, USACE held a Human Capital Summit (HCS) in Dallas, TX. The purpose of the HCS was to bring together a number of USACE employees – leaders and employees – to discuss Human Capital. There were approximately 100 attendees that worked on identifying gaps, strategies, obstacles, required resources, and metrics in the three categories of recruitment, retention, and development. The feedback from the HCS forms the foundation for this Human Capital Plan (HCP).

Strategic Guidance and Alignment

The DoD HCP, at Appendix D, is the first document that informs the USACE HCP and serves as a direction for our actions. USACE human capital efforts support the DoD goals of:

- 1) World Class Enterprise Leaders. Our plans address leader development, succession planning, and recruitment and retention of our workforce.
- 2) Mission-Ready Workforce. Development of our workforce is crucial to readiness for any mission, as are our Family Readiness initiatives, providing security to our employees that their families will be taken care of during deployments to Overseas Contingency Operations assignments or natural disasters – and enabling us to meet mission.
- 3) Results-Oriented Performance Culture. It is our goal that every employee understands how he/she fits into the mission of USACE. Actions we are taking to meet this challenge are outlined in this HCP.
- 4) Enterprise HR Support. This document is based on the relationships between HR and the organization's success.

We are tied directly to the Army Campaign Plan (ACP) (Appendix A). Our efforts in Human Capital will directly support all ACP Goals by enabling military programs, civil works, real estate, and the myriad of other programs to be successful.

The USACE Campaign Plan (CP), at Appendix B, contains three objectives that demonstrate the importance of Human Capital to the organization. These three objectives are embedded in two goals. Briefly, the goals and Human Capital related objectives are:

<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 1. <i>Deliver USACE support to combat, stability and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach back capabilities.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Objective 1c. <i>Establish human resources and family support programs that promote readiness and quality of life.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 2. <i>Deliver enduring and essential water resource solutions through collaboration with partners and stakeholders.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 3. <i>Deliver innovative, resilient, sustainable solutions to the Armed Forces and the Nation.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 4. <i>Build and cultivate a competent, disciplined, and resilient team equipped to deliver high quality solutions.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Objective 4a. <i>Identify, develop, maintain, and strengthen technical competencies in selected Communities of Practice (CoP).</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Objective 4d. <i>Establish tools and systems to get the right people in the right jobs, then develop and retain this highly skilled work force.</i></p>

Accomplishment of these objectives will result in human capital programs, systems and tools that set conditions for our leaders and employees to achieve their full potential. All leaders and employees will have the opportunity to perform a job that matches their skills and interests, to receive training and development that will improve and increase those skills, and to be competitive for new positions that will further challenge them and support mission execution. Leaders will have a full range of tools available to them that will enhance their ability to attract the right people for their positions and to retain them in a volatile and extremely competitive labor market.

USACE Major Subordinate Commands (MSC) are developing Implementation Plans (I-Plans) for the CP; and some subordinate organizations are preparing Operations Plans (O-Plans) to the CP. Additionally, HQ USACE staff offices have prepared I-Plans that outline the actions that will be taken at the headquarters level to meet the CP challenges.

The Human Resources I-Plan is at Appendix C, and includes actions addressing Human Capital requirements applicable to all Goals and Objectives.

Enablers for Human Capital

In order to fully meet the human capital needs that we face, there are three key enablers that must be present in the Corps. The first is top leadership commitment. This has been clearly demonstrated in the creation of the CP that has an entire goal focused on the people in the Corps. The second is management and leader engagement. As the top leadership continues to tell the “people” story of the Corps, management, leaders and employees become more and more engaged. All leaders must take seriously the necessity to take care of people and to guide and direct subordinate leaders, down to the team leader level, toward the importance of people in the organization. Finally, funding and resourcing of manpower are critical. We must ensure that funds are available to support manpower needed— leaders, HR, Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA), and supporting offices to include Equal Employment Opportunity and Public Affairs.

A Corporate Human Capital Strategy

USACE has operated with independence in our human capital programs and policies. Those developed by the headquarters have historically encouraged independent local action – an example is the leader development engineering regulation that provides the framework for four levels of leadership development and leaves program design to the local organization. And, our Human Resource Forward staff members at each Division provide support in the development of policies that apply only within that Division, without being expected to think beyond the serviced Division. As a result, each Major Subordinate Command (MSC), Laboratory and District has developed many of its own human capital programs, specific to local conditions and without the benefits of a corporate human capital program. We have demonstrated that we can “make do” with this system, but in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must think and act more regionally and nationally. Our competition, other Federal agencies and large corporations, have already realized the significance of this shift. For instance, NASA, an agency that hires a large number of engineers, is already mapping its human capital requirements from yesterday to tomorrow, knows the competencies that are needed for its future Constellation system, and is recruiting, training, and planning to those competencies.

Over the past year, USACE has made attempts to move toward a more corporate human capital program. HQ Civilian Human Resources, in coordination with the Career Program 18 Functional Chief Representative, challenged recruiters for job fairs at the Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) and Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC) Conferences to think more globally and come prepared to recruit for the Corps, instead of focusing on the home District. But this has been only marginally successful, even a year after the first effort. We were moderately successful in identifying candidates in the last six months (54 at HENAAC,

28 at BEYA) but none of the hires were considered for positions beyond a single Division, and few beyond a single District.

A much larger initiative that promises important results is the work the National Technical Competency Team (NTCT) has done in developing a corporate National Technical Competency Strategy (NTCS). In partnership with Army and Defense, the NTCT members are breaking new ground – examining competencies and identifying those that the Corps needs to perform the future work of the Nation and the Army. The NTCT is evaluating the technical competencies of engineering, construction, project management, planning, contracting, real estate, environmental, research and development, operations and maintenance and regulatory functions. That same team is determining, based on emerging work methods, which of today’s competencies are needed, which future competencies are required, and whether these future competencies will be required for employees in each and every District and Lab. Results from the NTCT efforts may change the paradigm in designing Centers of Standardization (CoS) and Centers of Excellence (CoE) where specialized competencies would be assembled.

Identification of future competencies and using CoS and CoE models will benefit the Corps in at least four ways. First, they will make operations more efficient and less costly, as fewer people will need to possess these competencies when massed. If we fail to become more efficient in our competency management, excess costs will be passed to our customers, and we are already at risk with some customers based on cost of doing business. The second reason to use a competency framework is that we must address the increasing difficulty in finding candidates and employees with these special competencies. We know that the STEM student population is rapidly declining and will not meet the Nation’s needs of the future, so we will be competing more heavily for fewer candidates.³ Third, these employees will be able to perform a full range of work in their specialties – performing interesting and exciting work that will keep them engaged. Finally, knowing our future competency requirements and organizing around those requirements will enhance and improve the process of employee and leader development.

The competency model provides a solid framework within which we can see our future. Once we understand our future, the Human Capital Strategy falls into place –and we act corporately in designing and building a well-developed, competent workforce. We link Communities of Practice (CoP) to NTCS and our leaders to incorporate their knowledge and understanding of the work into the human capital lifecycle. We teach our leaders to understand the corporate approach, and expect them to act accordingly, seeking more and more responsibility for key Corps operations. We recruit to competencies needed now and in the future; and create succession plans that move our highly skilled people into the right jobs at the right time. We know where our future positions will be and have a plan for transitioning our current organizational structure and our people to that future. We regularly identify the projects in our inventory that will develop our future competencies, and decide which of our employees is ready for an assignment that will build them for the

³ GAO, *Higher Education: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Trends and the Role of Federal Programs*, GAO-06-702T (Washington, D.C.: May 3, 2006)

future. We create performance objectives for our leaders and our employees that align their work to the mission of the Corps. We advance from good to great.

Human Capital in the Corps must be managed corporately to build a new culture for USACE – we must have a national holistic strategy for hiring, developing, placing and evaluating our people. We have to be able to identify the best and the brightest, bring them into the Corps to do meaningful work, offer them assignments that will grow them as leaders and as technical experts, and place them in the right jobs as they progress.

The details of the way ahead are not crystal clear – we need to study other government agencies and organizations (NASA, the Intelligence Community) as well as large private firms in our business that have learned these lessons to discover the most effective HC programs and apply them to the Corps. The Civilian Human Resources community will lead this effort in coordination with leaders across USACE and NTCT members. The outcome of the study and the lessons learned will be critical to our future, so we must begin immediately and conclude the study by the end of FY2009.

Human Capital Goals

The HC Summit and other interactions with our stakeholders have provided the initial foundation for the HC Challenges listed above, this HCP, and the HC goals, barriers, and solutions listed below. Both the HC Summit and this HCP are beginnings and will require much more work to be fully responsive to the Corps' current and future requirements. Inasmuch as these goals represent the issues facing USACE today, it must be recognized that satisfaction of each of these goals individually may not equally satisfy the need for a corporate strategy that knits together the goals into a cohesive plan for hiring, moving, developing, and utilizing people to get the mission done. In order to build that corporate strategy, over the next year, we will hold focus groups and interviews with leaders, employees and other stakeholders; benchmark with other agencies and companies; and explore contract support; to fully chart the way ahead – to determine the full range of challenges and barriers, determine if they are systemic, and discover holistic solutions designed for USACE.

The five goals selected were:

Goal 1: Recruit a diverse workforce to meet technical and leadership competencies

Goal 2. Manage performance to achieve excellence

Goal 3: Develop employees corporately

Goal 4: Retain the workforce of the future

Goal 5. Build strong families.

These goals speak to the issues raised over the past year from the grassroots level in the workforce, as well as the key concerns identified in our data review and presented as needing attention in the 2004, 2006, and 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) results. Across the board, recruitment, Goal 1, is at the top of the list of concerns raised by both leaders and employees, because of the heavy workload we are facing. Advancing from good to great requires that we ensure that our performance management system supports challenging work and alignment of employees' personal goals and objectives with those of the Corps – reflected in Goal 2. Another major message that continues to be raised in discussions about human capital is that we must begin to place more value on the workforce – this caused us to include Goals 3 and 4 that focus on developing and retaining our great employees. Finally, the expeditionary workforce requires that we take care of families during deployments to Overseas Contingency Operations assignments OCONUS and natural disasters in CONUS – Goal 5 addresses this new demand.

Goal 1: Recruit a diverse workforce to meet technical and leadership competencies (Talent Management)

As of 30 September 2008, USACE had 32,531 employees and a need to grow the workforce by approximately 3000 to meet its current requirements – approximately 2000 of which must be engineers. As of the writing of this document, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has been passed and promises to bring additional work to the Corps, primarily requiring additional construction management and contracting staff. We must fill the 3000 new jobs with a diverse range of employees and leaders who will be able to contribute quickly to mission accomplishment. While these 3000 positions present many opportunities for promotion of our current skilled workforce, we must in the end hire many new employees into the Corps family. With turnover, we must fill a total of 5400 new positions in the Corps in the next year.

I. Barriers to recruiting needed competencies in the workforce.

Unfortunately, there are a number of systemic barriers that have restricted the Corps efforts in recruitment. They are:

- Recruitment efforts have not been focused and there has been a lack of emphasis on corporate workforce planning and recruiting, resulting in unhealthy internal competition for USACE talent.
- Ineffective and inefficient Federal, DoD, Army and USACE hiring processes do not consider market conditions, provide adequate authorities, or reach the right candidates, contributing to long delays in filling jobs and inability to find the right person for the right job. This also results in lower capacity to be successful in the labor market.
- Leaders lack understanding of processes and flexibilities and are averse to risk – resulting in limited use of effective methods, and slowness in filling jobs.
- Insufficient resources exist to hire enough supervisors, administrative staff, or HR professionals, or procure marketing support, and the project funding construct contributes to these limitations on resources. A high and increasing workload along with these insufficient resources contributes to lack of focus on human capital requirements.

- There may be a negative image or misunderstanding of USACE and Army mission and work; and belief that civilian employment equates to joining the uniformed Army. This limits the ability to attract new candidates to the Corps.
- Systems do not exist to ensure that employees and families are valued and cared for prior to, during and after deployments, causing our employees to decline deployment.
- Math and science college majors are declining nation-wide, resulting in a much smaller pool of candidates for entry level positions that will compound our inability to recruit our critical positions in the future.

These challenges are reflected in how our employees responded on the FHCS; only 44 percent responded positively to the question of whether their work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills.

Employee perspective: Organization’s ability to recruit people with the right skills

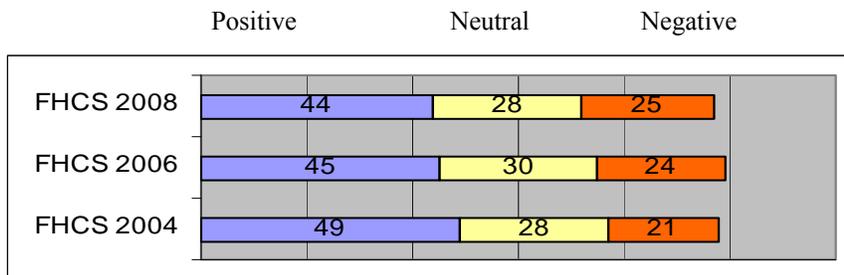


Table 1-1

II. USACE Actions, To Date.

What has USACE done to move in the right direction with regard to finding the right people for the right jobs? Some of the key actions are below.

1. One of the programs that sets us apart from other Army activities is our use of the Gallup Leadership Strengths Interview (LSI) as an evaluative tool to ensure that our top positions are filled with individuals that bring sound leadership skills to the table. Each Senior Executive Service candidate and top level GS/NSPS supervisors are referred to the Gallup Organization for an LSI prior to the interview and feedback from that interview is provided to the selecting panel and official. Validation studies have confirmed the correlation between success in the LSI and success as a leader.
2. We established a National Recruitment Team of engineering, contracting, and HR professionals that have created a process to find candidates for hard-to-fill jobs across the Corps, focusing on the mid-careerists. They use all available incentives as needed, as well as aggressive marketing, open continuous announcements, central program management, and commercially available tools to locate and select candidates for positions.

3. Visitors to the USACE web site find a “Careers” tab that will take them to all Corps jobs being filled.
4. Some Divisions and Districts have hired Workforce Management Coordinators to assist leaders in thinking strategically about the workforce and solving hiring problems.
5. Additional flexibility was provided for this fiscal year to allow commands to hire beyond their manpower limits. Specifically, each command is authorized to exceed its final full time equivalent (FTE) allocation by up to five percent in the year of execution and is expected to manage its hire lag aggressively to obtain the optimum use of manpower resources. Divisions are expected to cross level among Districts if possible before requesting additional FTE from HQs.
6. Mission Critical Occupations (MCO). The Office of Personnel Management directed that agencies identify MCOs – those occupations that are considered core to carrying out their missions. Such occupations usually reflect the primary mission of the organization without which mission-critical work cannot be completed. DoD and Army incorporated input from across the Services to form a consolidated list of MCOs for the Department and Army. We revalidated our MCOs and added 1102, Contracting Specialist. USACE MCOs are:

Engineering Technician, 0802
Civil Engineering, 0810
Mechanical Engineering, 0830
Electrical Engineering, 0850
Contracting Specialist, 1102
Realty Specialist, 1170
Lock and Dam Operator, 5426

MCOs are the foundation of our efforts in evaluating competency requirements, and in our national recruitment efforts – these are the backbone of our engineering capability. USACE formed a National Technical Competency Team (NTCT) in 2007 to identify USACE technical competencies needed now and in the future, analyze gaps and develop strategies to close them so that we will be able to deliver high quality products and services. Although the NTCT’s work is not complete, they have identified specific actions for maintaining and enhancing critical core technical competencies in the Technical Competence Status Report (<https://kme.usace.army.mil/CoPs/EANDC/default.aspx>). Functional areas addressed in the report include the Communities of Practice (CoP) of: Engineering and Construction, Project Management, Contracting, Planning, Real Estate, Environmental, and Operations. This team is working closely with Department of Army and DoD as they refine the Army Competency Management System (CMS) to ensure that the competencies required in our engineering and scientific disciplines are well described.

Although MCOs are highlighted above this plan applies to the entire USACE workforce. Certainly one of the expected outcomes of our human capital plan is to have employees who have the competencies and skills to accomplish the work.

7. USACE is strongly interested in the future of our Nation's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) capability – without it, we will not be able to serve the Nation as we do today. To build this bench, we have long standing relationships at all levels with schools, colleges and universities. Leaders at the local level visit institutes of higher learning in their footprint and build relationships that result in hiring students during or directly out of college. Several commands have formed relationships with local high schools and grade schools to encourage students in STEM subjects. At the national level, we budget for and attend career fairs associated with a number of national organization events such as the BEYA and HENAAC conferences. We attend other career fairs such as those supporting transitioning military members. Additionally, we believe that we have a responsibility to address the growing crisis in students pursuing STEM degrees and are working with local elementary schools, some in partnership with HENAAC, to introduce young people to the STEM fields. A new DoD program that we joined during 2008 is the Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) program that places STEM students in DoD organizations during their studies, and subsequently provides for their hire into the federal service.

8. USACE has encountered significant challenges in filling jobs in Iraq and Afghanistan to support the Overseas Contingency Operations. Using all sources, to include USACE employees, employees from other agencies, and new employees hired through Schedule A for temporary assignments – and using all possible financial incentives – the fill rate varied between 70 and 80%. In 2008, USACE created a “supported/supporting” relationship between Divisions in CONUS and Districts/Divisions in OCO, whereby the supporting Divisions are responsible for providing an adequate pipeline of civilian manpower to the supported organization, through recruiting for volunteers locally. The supported Division provides the supporting Division with manpower requirements by occupational series and grade, and the supporting Division identifies rotations of personnel into the future and deploys them as needed. Each CONUS Division was authorized a Deployment Support Coordinator position to perform duties related to identifying local volunteers and matching them with the positions to be filled. The process is too new as of this writing to evaluate its effectiveness, but anecdotal evidence supports its continuance.

III. Strategies and planned actions.

There are a number of human capital actions that must be taken to set the conditions for success in hiring the additional employees that we must have to complete our mission.

1. First and foremost, the Corps needs to understand near term and long term staffing requirements. The foundation for these requirements is found in the work of the NTCT toward a National Technical Competency Strategy (NTCS), based on the future work and structure, and the competencies needed. The NTCT is examining the role technical

competencies and positions will play in execution of the mission, and how USACE should be organized to deliver those services. The NTCT analyzed data from the DoD/DA Competency Management System (CMS) to assess gaps for 920 Civil Engineering positions. There were 47 gaps – in business, management, planning, professional, technical and technological competencies. Most of the gaps were either reflective of staffing shortages due to projected attrition; or an insufficient number of personnel at the most proficient level of competence. Given the projected retirement data, the expected change in the economy, and the potential for a much smaller pool of candidates, it is critical that we begin to address the recruiting challenges from a corporate perspective. In addition to the NTCT effort, we will need to study several other sources of data, to include expected and planned changes in mission, functions and operations; data from the CMS; trends in the market; retirement trends, and other projected turnover. We need to understand what the optimal mix of employees and leaders is, particularly in the USACE MCOs. CEHR will pursue funding for a longitudinal study to be accomplished during 2010 and 2011, in order to formulate the requirements for the next strategic planning cycle.

2. Resources continue to be of concern, both financial and manpower, and need corporate attention.

a. Hiring incentives must be funded and approved for use when appropriate. Because of USACE's project funding construct, HQ USACE HR will lead a Project Delivery Team (PDT) to explore whether national level funding should be provided for hiring incentives such as repayment of student loans, Defense National Relocation Program (DNPR), or recruitment, relocation and retention incentives. A recommendation will be presented to leadership NLT 31 December 2009.

Metric: Positive correlation between incentives used and requirements filled. A baseline for this measure and target will be established in FY09.

b. Managers and leaders are busy, more today than ever before. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many leaders are performing the work of the organization in addition to leading people, and some do not perform well as leaders. Possible reasons are that they are untrained, unskilled, uncomfortable with the leadership role, or simply overwhelmed. One major step that we can take is to relieve supervisors of some of the administrative burden of leading by hiring additional administrative staff. An estimate of the number of administrative staff is one for every 40 employees, to perform such duties as Corps of Engineers Financial Management System entries, creation and tracking of Requests for Personnel Action, tracking of suspenses and taskers, preparing documentation for awards and recognition, arranging for staff and all hands meetings, and so forth. This will cost approximately \$45,000 per administrative support staff (salary only, unburdened), depending on the location and the grade level. At a District of 500, this would add approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 to the cost of doing business. Further, USACE needs to do additional study to determine the true causes; and what possible solutions exist. CEHR will form a PDT to explore this problem and present additional solutions NLT 31 December 2010.

Metric: Ratio of administrative staff to employees.

3. HCPs are being developed at all levels. Local District and Center HCPs must include sound workforce plans, based on the five goals contained in this HCP and include actions addressing variances from CLF statistics. Local plans should describe methods for hiring, retaining, and developing employees with required competencies based on three to five year workload and income projections and examination of projections from the Workforce Analysis Support System/Civilian Forecasting System (WASS/CIVFORS) – as documented on an accurate Integrated Manning Document. Plans will include hiring at all levels, from intern to senior leaders, to meet future requirements, including deployment. Local plans must consider and address provisions for filling jobs in the Transatlantic Division area of responsibility. Once approved by the MSC Commander, this plan will eliminate the need for individual approvals of recruit actions. The battle rhythm must include a schedule for review and updating the plan each fiscal year. This is a new skill and managers and leaders will require coaching and training to be able to complete the plan. HQ USACE Human Resources (CEHR) will set up workforce planning training on a train the trainer basis beginning by first quarter FY10. Finally, senior leadership must hold managers accountable for development and implementation of their part of the plan during the rating period.

Metric: Number of workforce plans developed and reviewed annually. During FY 2009, we will establish a baseline with a first target of 70%; with an increase of 10% each following year.

Metric: Diversity of the workforce targeted to move toward Civilian Labor Force percentages.

4. The Federal hiring system is, according to multiple sources, slow and cumbersome. We will take aggressive action at all levels to make the recruitment process more efficient and effective. This effort will fall into several categories:

- a. Our partners in human resources, the Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA) have carried out Lean Six Sigma (LSS) studies that informed a number of improvements in the recruitment process, primarily focusing on the process from receipt of the Request for Personnel Action in the CPAC to commitment of an employee to the position. Those improvements are being implemented across CHRA. USACE leaders must ensure that they understand the change and become fully engaged in the recruitment process.
- b. Leaders must actively recruit for their vacant positions and USACE as a whole. Leaders should be knowledgeable of recruitment sources and take positive action to locate new candidates.
- c. Leaders should monitor the fill in the organization, and second level or higher supervisors should request periodic reports from the CPAC as to status of recruit actions. These reports (sample at Appendix A) will provide information regarding delays in the hiring process. Leaders must address these delays and improve fill time. Metric: Percent of requirements filled (target 90% in FY 2009; 93% in

2010; 95% for 2011). To reach this goal, we will target 100 fills per week, USACE wide.

- d. HQ USACE Directorate of Human Resources (CEHR) will take several actions to improve USACE-wide recruitment:
 - a. Review, coordinate and simplify the Corporate Recruitment and Selection Procedures that apply to our senior leaders, NLT 31 May 2009.
 - b. ICW leadership, study the use of the Gallup Leadership Strengths Interview as a selection tool, explore other available evaluative tools, and select a tool NLT 30 September 2009.
 - c. Request and press DoD and Office of Personnel Management for noncompetitive conversion authority for Schedule A appointees returning from Iraq or Afghanistan.
 - d. Explore application of Alternate Forms of Competition approved under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), to include assessment boards, alternate certification, and exceptional performance promotions. ICW leadership, CEHR will make a decision on usage NLT 30 June 2010.
 - e. Develop and implement a recruitment toolkit to include guidance for leaders, managers and supervisors on their active role in recruitment and improve website capabilities for employment NLT 30 June 2010.
 - f. Hire a corporate recruiter NLT 30 April 2009 to lead efforts for national level aggressive recruitment through use of 21st century tools. Set the standard for changing the culture to aggressively recruit for our positions.
 - g. Explore the possibility of and funding for a professional marketing firm to tell the Corps story to potential candidates, NLT 30 September 2009.
 - h. As data supports it, request direct hire authority through Department of Army, from either Department of Defense, or Office of Personnel Management.
 - i. Request approval for increase of relocation incentives to attract candidates to service in Overseas Contingency Operations positions, NLT 30 June 2009.
 - j. Benchmark corporate and other agency programs for recruiting to find efficiencies and process improvements NLT 31 December 2010 and implement changes NLT 30 September 2011.
 - k. Develop a survey of employees (may be exit survey, entrance survey, survey of workforce) to determine why they take a position with USACE, why they stay, why they leave, and how they fit their positions – NLT 31 December 2010. Metric: Quality of recruits and “fit” in the job, as measured by a survey of new employees and supervisors. Measurement tool and baseline will be established in 2010.
Metric: Improved new hire retention rate. Reduce voluntary separations in MCOs by 10% each year, beginning in FY 10.
 - l. Monitor fill time and report to the leadership through the Directorate Management Review process. During 2010, we will review the fill time and determine whether to pursue contract support for operating level civilian human resources. Metric: Time to fill positions, measured by

calendar days. Target for FY 2009 is to hold steady at 49 days despite projected increase in volume.

- m. Identify method to share best practices and implement NLT 30 September 2010.

Goal 2. Manage performance to achieve excellence (Performance Culture)

The USACE Vision –”A GREAT engineering force of highly disciplined people working with our partners through disciplined thought and action to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the Nation’s engineering challenges” – requires a workforce that is ready to perform, and focused on results. In order for employees to be focused, they must all understand their place in the organization and how they contribute to the mission, vision, and goals and objectives. USACE has three performance management systems: NSPS (approximately 12,000 positions); The Army Personnel Evaluation System (TAPES) for those employees on GS and Wage Grade positions – approximately 21,000; and the Laboratory Demonstration (Lab Demo) system (1,541 positions). NSPS utilizes SMART (specific, measurable, aligned, relevant/realistic, and timed) objectives and a performance management system that is designed and disciplined to make meaningful distinctions between levels of performance. The TAPES system is less disciplined and Army as well as USACE experience is that most employees are evaluated at the “top block” (over 70%) in USACE. Distinctions in performance under TAPES are generally made in the size of the performance award (these ranged from \$100 to \$5,000 for the rating period ending October 2008).

Building a great organization to last, as seen in the Chief of Engineer’s introduction, requires that USACE delivers superior performance. The first priority for this goal is to ensure that employees clearly understand what superior performance is and how their work supports the mission – through the use of good, well defined objectives that link to the mission (for both NSPS and TAPES). The second priority is to provide regular and valuable feedback to employees so that they understand how their accomplishments contribute to the organization in its quest for greatness. The third is to fairly evaluate performance against objectives.

I. Barriers to building the organization to last.

The Lab Demo system is used only in the Engineering and Research Development Center – but we operate the other two performance management systems side by side in many organizations. In some organizations, employees performing virtually identical work may be either assigned to GS or NSPS positions and be evaluated differently. NSPS employees in CONUS that deploy to an assignment supporting the Overseas Contingency Operations are moved to GS for their deployment and back to NSPS upon return, an inefficient business process (and one that is prone to creating pay problems). NSPS is a pay for performance system and carries a culture that the majority of ratings are expected to be “valued performer” level – a Level 3 rating. USACE (and Army) culture surrounding the TAPES system is that ratings lower than “top block” are

unacceptable. Over 70% of TAPES employees received a Level 1 (Outstanding) rating at the end of October, 2008, and 20% received a Level 2 (Exceeds Fully Successful) rating. Only 6% received a Level 3, or Fully Successful rating, as compared to 58% of NSPS employees. This accentuates the difference between NSPS and TAPES, makes it more difficult to change the NSPS culture, and creates “haves” and “have nots” in performance management.

Supervisors have not consistently utilized the SMART format for objectives under TAPES and as a result most TAPES objectives have been lists of tasks, difficult to evaluate and provide feedback for. While NSPS advocates the SMART format for objectives, most objectives in this system also fall short of the mark.

Many supervisors do not assign performance objectives within the first 30 days of the rating period, or hold interim rating discussions with employees. This detracts from an employee’s ability to perform to his or her potential. And while all NSPS employees receive a rating because of the direct tie to salary increases and bonuses, many TAPES employees still do not receive an official rating (13% of USACE TAPES employees, for the rating period ending 31 October 2008).

All of these factors weaken the effectiveness of performance management in USACE. Survey results from the FHCS corroborate this in a number of areas:

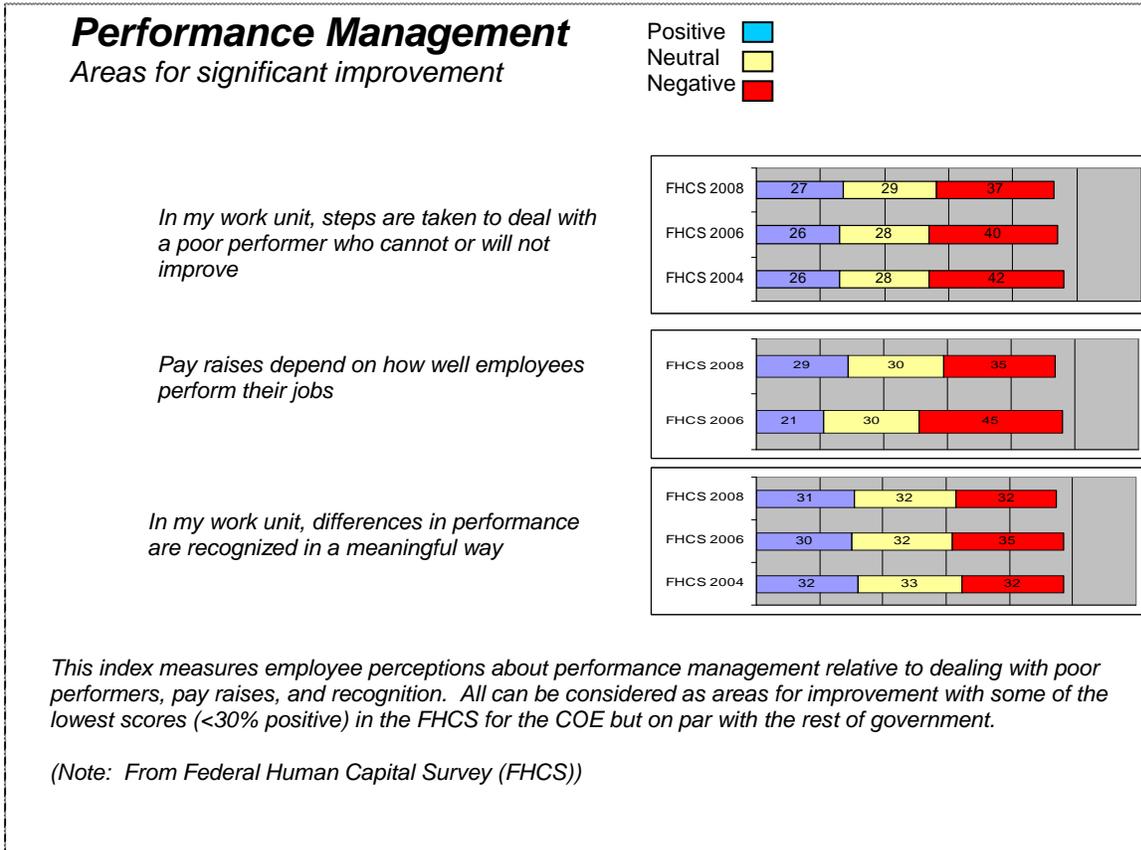


Chart 2-1

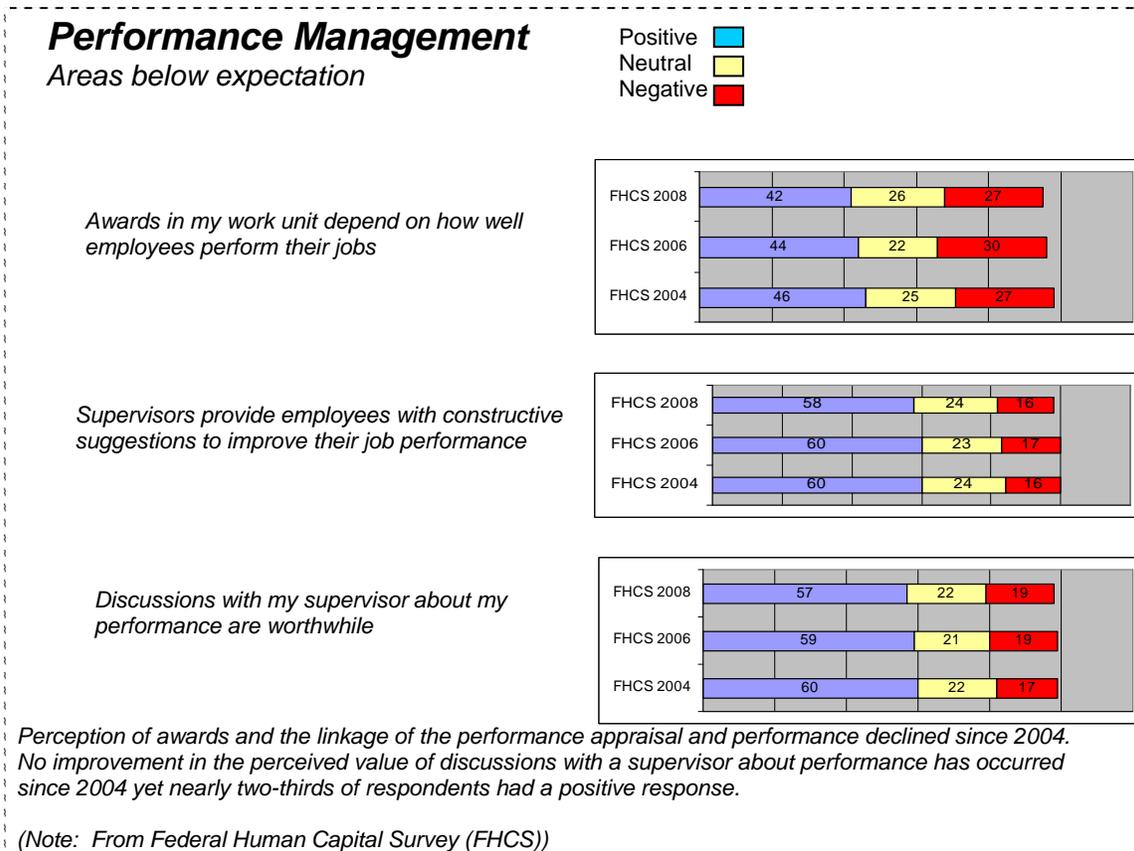


Table 2-2

II. USACE Actions, To Date.

1. NSPS is a pay for performance system developed by Department of Defense that is designed to make meaningful distinctions in performance ratings and align objectives and performance to the mission of the organization. USACE successfully converted over 12,000 employees to NSPS since 2006. After the first performance management cycle, USACE completed a program evaluation of NSPS using a Project Delivery Team (members of the USACE team included employees, leaders (military and civilian) and HR representatives). This evaluation examined the pre-deployment decision-making process, issues of concern, and the outcome of the pay pool process. The study confirmed the corporate value of NSPS in reviewing mission accomplishment by individuals and to some extent, organizations. Actions taken as a result of this review were to modify the business rules and create greater command emphasis on the proper application of NSPS tools and guidance. Improved consistency in ratings across the command resulted in the next rating cycle.

2. USACE cannot reach great unless all employees have a results-oriented performance management system. During 2008, USACE used OPM's Performance Appraisal Assessment Tool (PAAT) to complete an evaluation of the TAPES process in USACE,

and we found few TAPES performance objectives that were aligned to the mission and followed the SMART format. To address this, the Chief of Engineers directed all USACE supervisors to ensure employees understand the linkage between their performance objectives and the Campaign Plan, and to write all objectives in the SMART format, both for NSPS and TAPES ratings. In January, 2009, we developed and piloted training entitled “Putting the “I” in the I-Plan” that is specifically designed to teach development of SMART objectives, with a focus on “A”, and evaluation of performance against SMART objectives.

3. ERDC has operated the Lab Demo system for 10 years. It covers 1,541 people and is a successful pay-for-performance system. Employees and leaders alike trust it and endorse its results.

III. Strategies and planned actions.

1. Leaders at all levels must embrace the requirement to link performance objectives to the Campaign Plan goals and objectives, and to the MSC and District Implementation and Operational Plans. They must also fully support the development of measurable performance objectives. These commitments must become part of regular leader discussions, and other venues such as town halls – and be inculcated into the culture of the organization.

2. USACE will continue to take practical steps to improve its application of NSPS and TAPES processes, to reduce the cultural differences between the two, align performance objectives to the mission and campaign plan, and use both to make meaningful distinctions in performance.

a. Command-wide training must continue, with a goal to reach all employees and leaders with lessons learned from the first two rating cycles under NSPS, writing SMART objectives, and evaluating performance. CEHR will lead a team to consolidate and evaluate lessons learned, develop train-the-trainer sessions and deliver them to a cadre of MSC and District trainers, who will in turn complete training of all employees NLT 30 June 2009.

b. Deployed civilians need to be assigned to OCO positions in the same system as they hold in CONUS, so that some employees will be on NSPS in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other deployed areas. However, employees on NSPS in OCO will not be in pay pools in the war zone. CEHR will lead a team to develop a business process for evaluation of NSPS OCO employees NLT 31 May 2009. The process will incorporate them into home station pay pools, provide for standardized objectives as appropriate, and ensure effective transition.

c. Leaders must continue to work toward SMART objectives for both TAPES and NSPS. CEHR will lead a team to review a sampling of performance objectives, provide feedback to leaders of evaluated objectives, and develop courses of action to improve the process NLT 31 August 2009.

Metric: Both NSPS and TAPES objectives are written in the SMART format. A statistically valid sampling of plans during July of each year demonstrates initially that at least 75% are written in the SMART format and there is a 5% improvement per year in the succeeding years.

d. Raters must be held accountable for preparing sound, SMART objectives and for evaluating employee performance against those objectives consistent with the guidance provided for each system. Higher level reviewers must also be held accountable for ensuring that raters apply the guidelines consistently and appropriately. CEHR will incorporate additional guidance requiring that leader performance in this area be considered in the rating process.

Metric: Percentage of employees receive performance objectives during the first 30 days of the Rating Year (RY). Target is 75%. Percentage of interim performance discussions midway through the rating period. Target is continued improvement by 5% each year thereafter to reach 100% (where this cannot be withdrawn from an automated system, a statistically valid sample size will be reviewed).

e. We must find ways to improve the pay pool process for NSPS. We will convene a Project Delivery Team to examine lessons learned, evaluate improvements in the process, and make recommendations to the leadership NLT 31 May 2009. Specific areas to review include blind voting prior to convening the pool, modification of rules regarding rater rewrites, and finding ways to reduce the pay pool time by 50% for the next rating cycle.

Metric: NSPS pay pool time in RY 09 is reduced by one-half from RY 08 time.

3. A full dialogue about the need for managers and leaders to focus on supervision is included in the discussion of Goal 4 below – specifically, Para II.4. This topic is closely tied to performance management, and must be a part of our efforts in building the organization to last. We are planning to examine improvements in supervisory selection, training, and accountability, to ensure our leaders of the future have the skills, training, assets and time to manage performance as well as accomplish other supervisory and leader functions.

Goal 3: Develop employees corporately (Talent Management; Leadership and Knowledge Management)

USACE has long recognized the importance of learning. Our initial learning doctrine was published in November, 2003. Since that time we have continued to build a strong learning foundation as well as the expectation that USACE employees will be life long learners. Recently, the Corps has also recognized that while we have placed much emphasis on leader development, a greater focus on technical development is now required. But more importantly, while we have been successful in training individuals, as

evidenced by the Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) results in Figure 3-1, we have not taken a strategic approach to development of our workforce.

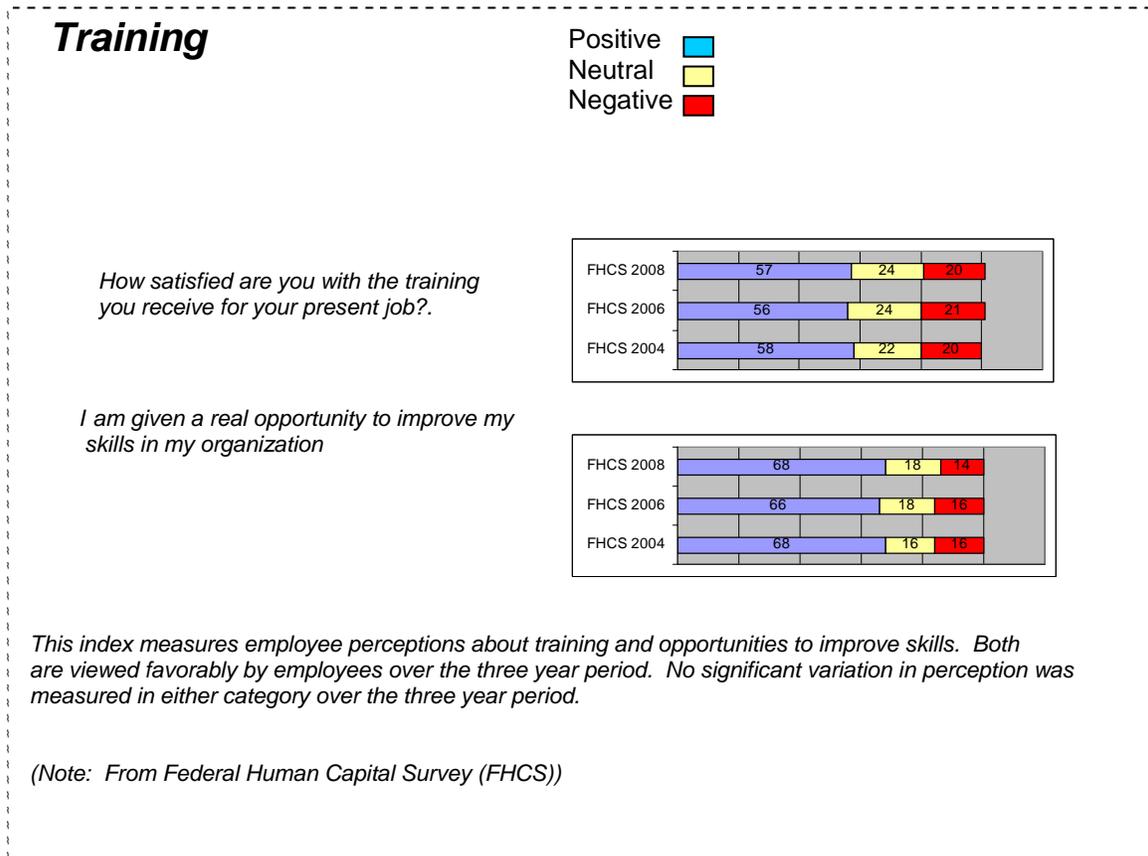


Figure 3-1.

I. Barriers to developing the workforce.

The absence of a corporate model and program for training and development detracts from our ability to evolve as a learning organization. FHCS results indicate that for the most part, our employees view current training as adequate for their present positions (Figure 3-1). However, their perceptions are influenced by the business of today, without understanding the future of USACE, how they may fit in, and the skills they will need for the future. Additionally, we see that:

a. Leaders and employees alike are overwhelmed with the sheer magnitude of the increased work that we have to do – in some locations and occupations, the volume is up to four times over historic levels. This leaves inadequate time to research options and communicate with the workforce. Leaders are reluctant to release employees for training because of the workload; and employees are reluctant to be away from the workplace. And, because there is no corporate system, information is not readily available so many leaders are not aware of tools that are available. Finally, some leaders and employees lack a commitment to development.

b. There is no corporate funding stream or even funding model. Funding is inconsistently distributed for training and many times funds are either unspent at the end

of the fiscal year or are unavailable because of a reluctance to raise overhead rates. Funding sources are limited because of concern that additional training costs will impact customer costs.

II. USACE Actions, To Date.

1. USACE analyzed data from the DoD/DA Competency Management System (CMS) to perform a competency gap assessment on 920 Civil Engineering positions. This assessment identified gaps in technical and non-technical competencies. Forty-seven validated competencies reflect gaps – 4 business, 8 management, 3 planning, 10 professional, 20 technical, and 2 technological. The majority of gaps fell into two categories, 1) staffing shortage due to projected attrition and 2) insufficient number of personnel in proficiency level 5 (Extremely Proficient/Important). It is this second gap that is most critical to address in developing the workforce. The National Technical Competency Team (NTCT) is evaluating USACE's future mission and workload, the role technical competencies and positions will play in execution of the mission, and how USACE should be organized to deliver those services. The NTCT will also develop short term and long term strategies, processes and metrics to sustain the evaluation of technical competencies. Metrics will drive an organizational focus on maintaining and enhancing technical competency. All of this will enhance the organization's technical competency, and will also link directly to improved performance of both organization and the individual.

2. The Chief of Engineers is the Functional Chief (FC) for the career program covering Engineers and Scientists (Resources and Construction) for the Army, and one of the USACE Senior Executive Service positions is the Functional Chief's Representative (FCR) for that career program. USACE has, at the direction of the FCR, updated the Master Intern Training Plan (MITP) that lays out the path that our interns in this career program should follow for development. The goal of the MITP is to prepare Career Program Interns to serve at the full performance level required to address the breadth of challenges and opportunities facing the Army today. Challenging rotational assignments combined with classroom and distance learning experiences constitute the heart of the program. The plan provides suggested rotations with specific learning objectives and evaluation measures for use by the intern and rotational supervisor.

3. All employees are encouraged to take the Strengthsfinder© program and to receive coaching from one of our Strengths Coaches. We have 90 trained and 39 certified Strengths Coaches in USACE. Employees take an online assessment that provides them an assessment of strengths, and the coaching assists them in playing to their strengths in the workplace. Many organizations use these strengths assessments in off sites and team building.

4. The USACE Learning Center (ULC), located in Huntsville, Alabama, was established over 30 years ago meet the unique developmental and training needs of the USACE. The ULC manages and implements the Proponent-Sponsored Engineer Corps Training (PROSPECT) Program, attended by USACE employees and employees of other

government agencies and contractors. The program provides job-related training through technical, professional, managerial, and leadership courses. The PROSPECT program, offering select courses worldwide in addition to those at the primary Huntsville location, provides training designed to maintain technical knowledge required for competent performance; provide technology transfer; increase technical knowledge for professional growth; teach new techniques and skills; orient new employees; and provide cross training aid in multi-disciplinary technical communications. Although the ULC has been in existence for 30 years, courses are constantly updated and revised to meet current needs of the Corps and its partners. The course catalog for the PROSPECT Program, currently lists over 200 courses that cover a wide variety of topics supporting the missions of USACE. Highly dedicated instructors who excel in their areas of expertise are selected from headquarters, divisions, districts, laboratories, the ULC, or from universities or private firms to design and teach the PROSPECT courses. During 2008, a total of 8551 students attended ULC courses.

5. Two learning management systems are in use in the Corps that will be consolidated in the future.

a. The USACE Learning Network (ULN) is a robust Enterprise-wide Learning Management System powered by the Oracle-based iLearning suite. This system, when fully fielded, will save USACE travel and per diem costs by delivering essential training to the desktop. It will continue to reduce training costs, in later years, and provide forward deployed OCO forces “Just in time” training. This one stop access point to USACE online and classroom courses and other learning resources will be a readiness enabler for the USACE communities of practice. The ULN will provide convenient access to training resources from other government educational partners and universities. The Learning Management System, by definition, provides the internal structure to incorporate the METL/Training needs function of the Automated Training Management Program (ATMP), thus saving more dollars annually.

b. The ATMP provides a uniform, automated method of recording, storing, retrieving, and reporting information related to Corps of Engineers organizational and employee Mission Essential Task Lists (METL) and Individual Development Plans (IDP). ATMP supports the following organizational functional areas: organizational and employee METL, 5 year IDPs, training prioritization, training budget and expenses, and regional course catalog and reporting. It provides for consistent status reporting, accuracy in data recording, easy retrieval of data and enhanced, continuous monitoring and easier management. It also reduces data duplication across organizations and permits users at different levels to access data that supports their work requirements. Data available in ATMP will show METL for each Division’s and District’s organizations and employees, training courses selected on IDPs, estimated budgets and actual expenses for training. ATMP is being fully deployed across USACE, with a target completion date of 30 September 2009. It should be noted that all acquisition workforce members in the following career fields must use the Career Acquisition Personnel and Position Management Information System (CAPPMIS) to complete their IDPs, Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB) and continuous learning points: Program Management, Industrial

Property Management, Facilities Engineering, Production/Quality/Manufacturing, Science and Technology Management, Business and Financial Management, Life Cycle Logistics, Information Technology, Systems Planning, Research, Development & Engineering, Test and Evaluation, and Contracting.

6. USACE has demonstrated a commitment to leader development, having established a four level leader development program across the Corps and an emerging leader program. The first three levels of the leader development program are mature and decentralized; efforts are under way to identify funding for and create a full level four program.

III. Strategies and planned actions.

USACE must assess its current and future standing with regard to corporate workforce development. We must be able to establish a corporate culture and program to develop the workforce. CEHR will use the results of the NTCT competency assessments; other available data; and results of Federal Human Capital Surveys; to determine true barriers, and recommend paths (including sourcing) to reduce the gaps. Contractor support will be needed in order to analyze these results. The outcome will be a corporate process, that when applied, will contribute towards development of competencies and decide which of our employees are ready for assignments that will build them for the future; recommend a percentage of labor costs that should be dedicated to annual workforce development, including travel and labor; and examine needed changes in corporate policies like emerging leader and leader development programs. Operational and tactical areas of possible improvement include creation of annual refresher training for leaders; consideration of a mobile training unit for supervisory courses; use of incentives for leaders and employees that encourage training, and the like. This study will occur during FY2010.

As bridging strategies, the NTCT will continue its important work and establish and publish certification requirements. The team will provide analysis of the technical gaps in workforce competencies. Results of the NTCT study will be provided to leadership, the Community of Practice leaders, and Functional Chief Representatives who will take appropriate action to provide adequate training and development opportunities and see that they are fully utilized, in order to close the gaps. Leaders at all levels will work toward Goal 4, Objective c, to populate the Quality Management System (QMS) with best practices, to enable knowledge management and transfer. As Centers of Standardization (CoS) and Centers of Excellence (CoE) are created and become fully functional, leadership in these CoSs and CoEs, along with the CoP leaders, will ensure that those individuals assigned are the USACE-wide experts in their fields, and will concentrate those development plans on competency gaps.

1. In order to maintain forward movement during 2009 and 2010, we will take a number of actions to make leader development a priority in USACE. We will:

a. Fully utilize Army's Civilian Education System (CES) quotas for USACE beginning in 2009, by subdividing quotas to the MSCs, monitoring usage, and cross

leveling unused quotas to organizations that are able to use them. System will be in place to manage the quotas NLT 30 April 2009.

Metric: 90% of training dollars allocated and utilized for employee development annually.

b. Ensure that each supervisor is rated fairly on the Army standard supervisory NSPS performance objective (modified for USACE). The objective, inserted below, includes the phrase “Execute the full range of human resources ... responsibilities” which requires ensuring adequate development of employees; as well as coaching and mentoring them. This aspect of leadership must be specifically addressed in the rater’s assessment. Failure to perform coaching, counseling, mentoring and development of their team will be carefully considered when determining the final rating on these objectives.

“Execute the full range of human resources (including performance management as outlined in DoD 1400.25- M, SC1940.5.7.4.) and fiscal responsibilities within established timelines and in accordance with applicable regulations. Adhere to merit principles. Develop a vision for the work unit; align performance expectations with organizational goals. Maintain a safe work environment and promptly address allegations of noncompliance. Ensure EEO/EO principles are adhered to throughout the organization. Ensure continuing application of, and compliance with, applicable laws, regulations and policies governing prohibited personnel practices; promptly address allegations of prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Fully support the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) efforts with regard to civilian deployment, extension, and redeployment and by promoting opportunities for USACE civilians to contribute their talents to DoD’s mission and by encouraging all members of the workforce to consider accepting a contingency assignment.”

2. Also important to USACE success is the caliber of technical development that we continue to provide. We will take the following steps to improve our efforts.

a. An addendum to the position description of all reemployed annuitants will require that each mentor at least one more junior individual in the organization; and have a mandatory performance objective to measure their success. These tools may also be used for current senior employees that possess valuable experience and competencies that need to be transferred to more junior employees. CEHR will, in coordination with stakeholders, prepare and issue the PD addendum and mandatory objective NLT 30 September 2009.

Metric: Members of our workforce are sought out as experts and recognized by others. Baseline during 2009. Target TBD.

b. Using ATMP, leaders must ensure that all employees have an IDP. Communication must take place at least twice annually between leaders and employees about their personal development plans.

Metric: Percentage of IDPs completed by employees and approved by supervisors (from ATMP). Target of 100%.

Metric: Every employee completes 100% mandated (priority 1) training in IDP.

c. Leaders at all levels must begin to identify developmental opportunities available within their areas of responsibility due to the historic workload level, and advertise them to the workforce in coordination with the Communities of Practice (CoP) to seek appropriate candidates. Additionally, leaders will identify cross training opportunities for their teams and coordinate with other leaders and the CoPs to cross train more broadly.

3. Management of the training program needs to be improved. We will take the following actions:

a. Where determined appropriate by the command, hire full time training coordinators at District and Division levels. These positions should be closely aligned to the CEHR assets at the Division for advice, guidance, and oversight. CEHR will prepare a model position description for these positions and issue NLT 30 September 2009. One per District and Division will cost the Corps approximately \$3.8M annually (salary only, unburdened).

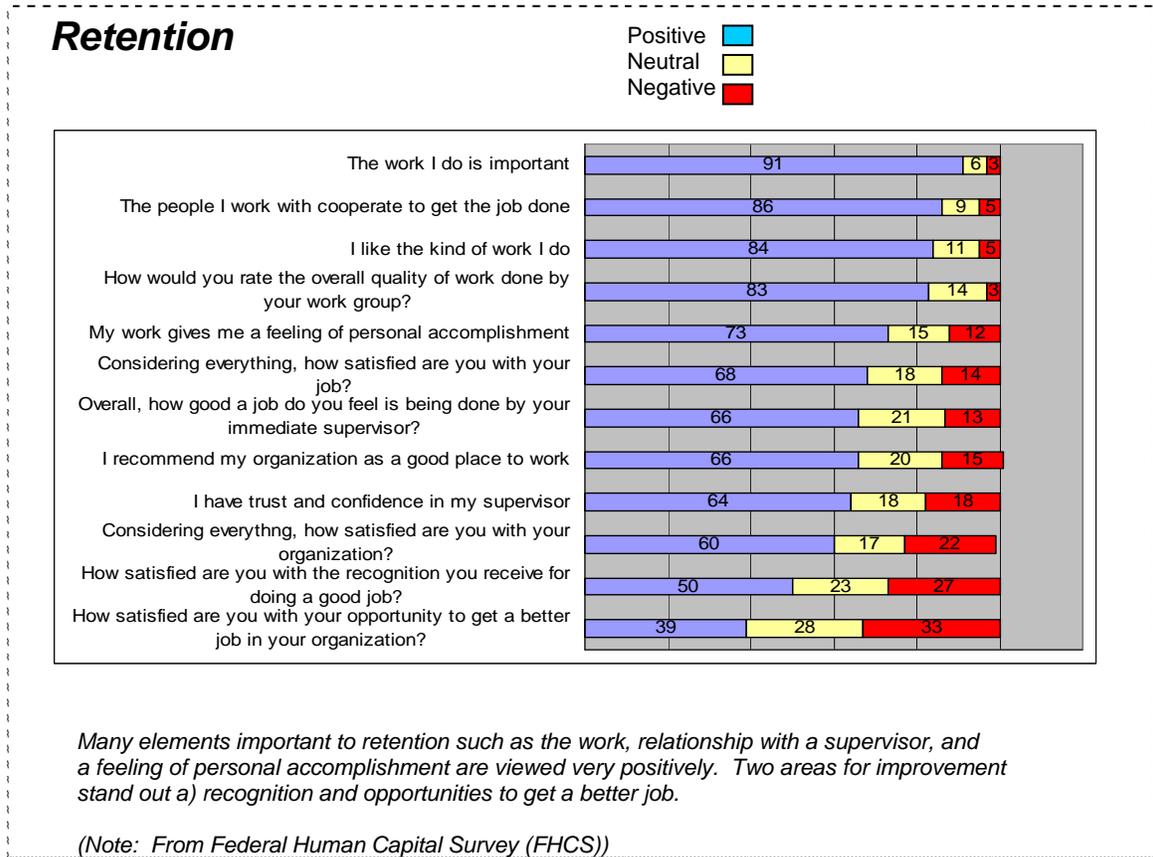
Metric: Number of training coordinators at MSC and District within 1 year.

b. Improve communication USACE-wide regarding training and development opportunities to include Leader Development Programs. CEHR will enhance the current website to provide additional information and guidance, NLT 31 December 2009. It will include a central source for information, including guidance, bulletin board, District and Division pages, recognition of successful programs, and technical competency plans with comment as appropriate. A network will be formed to communicate availability of new information and encourage use of the website, and employee feedback will be gathered through the website.

c. Evaluate current available training programs and policies. CEHR (ICW NTCT) will, as part of its focus on reducing gaps in technical competencies, assess all programs and policies, considering the changing organization and workload. For non-technical training, CEHR and ULC will work with CoP leaders to form PDTs as necessary to complete these reviews, update training requirements, and plan to develop and modify current training offerings and policies. This will be a long term project, to be complete NLT end of FY2011. This will include a review of the Leader Development Program.

Goal 4: Retain the workforce of the future (Performance Culture; Talent Management)

Turnover is low in USACE – approximately 7-8%, depending on location and job series. The current economy and rising unemployment rate (8.1% as of February, 2009) is expected to create an environment where we can more readily fill positions and retain our valued employees in the short term. Senior employees are not leaving in large numbers as has been predicted for a number of years and with the economic situation, our retirement age population is less likely to retire as soon as eligible. In fact, approximately 10% of our workforce is past retirement eligibility now and has not made the decision to retire. The USACE biennial Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) results for questions relating to retention are generally positive, with scores as high as 91% agreement with the statement “The work I do is important” (see Figure 4-1). However, further results from the FHCS survey show that recognition and development opportunities received the least favorable positive ratings in this category.



Voluntary separations in the workforce as a whole are higher during the first five to six years of employment and then decline. Employees that stay with the Corps for six years tend to remain with us for longer periods of time – loss rates reduce after the sixth year.

This holds true for the MCO of the 810, Civil Engineer series, but not for the other MCOs. We are generally able to retain those in 802, 830, 850, 1170, and 5426 series equally well starting early in employees' careers.

An economic upturn will certainly reduce the number of available USACE candidates, particularly in the most sought-after fields such as engineering, and we know that the Nation is producing many fewer STEM graduates than are needed. Our aging workforce reflects a larger percentage of the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers than found in DoD or other federal agencies, so we are retaining the skills we need now – but may be in trouble for the future when they retire, because our pipeline of new talent is not equivalent in size to the retirement eligible population. And while we know that our employees do not generally retire on the day of eligibility, the likelihood of a “retirement bubble” grows as the age of the workforce increases and the economy improves. Finally, retention of Generation X and Generation Y requires new thinking and flexibilities in management and leadership – our current X and Y employees that will be our future senior workforce will almost surely require more concentrated attention. These changes and associated challenges can only be met through a corporate view of retention. As we have seen in the previous three goals, we must understand which competencies we will need in the future – and when we know those requirements, we must target our most robust retention efforts on the workforce possessing those competencies.

Workforce Demographics

Generation	National		DoD		USACE	
	Workforce	% of Workforce	Workforce	% of Workforce	Workforce	% of Workforce
Silent Generation (Born before 1946)	56,407	2.91%	16,812	2.45%	1,563	4.93%
Baby Boomers (Born 1946-1964)	1,070,282	55.20%	403,777	58.73%	19,892	62.73%
Generation X (Born 1965-1976)	600,501	30.97%	192,555	28.01%	6,199	19.55%
Generation Y (Born 1977-1989)	202,198	10.43%	70,014	10.18%	3,969	12.52%
Millennium (Born 1990-present)	9,432	.49%	4,402	.64%	88	.28%
Totals	1,938,820	100%	687,560	100%	31,711	100%

Source: FEDSCOPE as of September, 2008

Figure 4-2

I. Barriers to retention of the future workforce.

Employee retention must be informed by a corporate view of the work and the workforce we will need in the future, and an understanding of retention factors. Primary barriers to retention, as assessed through data review and input from a range of USACE team members, include:

1. A corporate program for retention and succession planning does not exist. As a result, leaders are left on their own to discern the right actions to take. Studies have shown that most employees leave positions because of their first line supervisors, and our leaders do not necessarily have the time or skills to build retention or succession programs for their teams. Many of our leaders are selected for their outstanding technical ability and may not have leadership skills to fully understand the factors in retention, or to provide a climate that contributes to retention. Training is not always available for these leaders in supervision, coaching, and mentoring, nor is it identified as a top priority. As stated previously in this document, the Corps is busier now than ever in its history and many of our leaders also have action officer work to do (many speak of it as “real work”) in addition to leading their teams. They must perform administrative work related to supervision (personnel action and financial management actions, as examples) that cannot be delegated to administrative staff because the administrative staff members either do not exist or cannot be granted access to the systems that are used. Leaders don’t always understand or accept generational differences, or know how to work with a diverse team. Finally, USACE does not corporately manage, or fund and encourage training, to include developmental assignments. These conditions may result in a lack of mentoring and development – and even more problematic, a scarcity of basic communication with employees about their jobs, low levels of recognition, and reduced supervisory interaction with the team.
2. Communication with the workforce could be improved. For instance, some employees are concerned that the work of USACE is changing – that there is an inadequate amount of work performed in house and that as a result, there is not enough interesting work to keep employees engaged and provide opportunities for advancement. This may be understood as a growing inability to offer employees exciting work and a future with USACE, and can negatively affect retention. Also, career development programs are not as well understood or clear as they could be, causing employees to believe the organization is not committed to development.
3. In the areas outside the continental US (OCONUS), the DoD five year limit on employment causes higher turnover than here at home; and the lack of locality pay OCONUS may cause employees that are nearing retirement to decline consideration for, or leave jobs in the overseas areas.
4. We are operating under four separate white collar pay systems. Anecdotal evidence suggests that employees may seek avenues to move back and forth between the systems

for financial benefit, and this may also cause some to leave USACE for other opportunities.

II. USACE Actions, To Date.

USACE has taken very few actions that specifically address retention. Although not designed for retention purposes or to improve the impact of leadership on the workforce, we do address leadership quality through a corporate recruitment and selection process that requires the use of a leadership strengths assessment, as well as a substantial leader development program.

III. Strategies and Planned Actions.

The Corps must begin action to plan for retention of the right competencies for the future workforce, in consideration of the work design being developed as part of the NTCS.

1. USACE must first understand the workforce of the future and the competencies required in order to address retention needs accurately. This will result from actions being taken in Goals 1-3 above. In addition, we must understand the issues contributing to turnover and retention, to include the national economic environment, changes in generational expectations, workforce forecasts to include expected retirement in the out years, workload projections, and workforce satisfaction – and their effect on the Corps' future workforce. We need to understand why our long term employees stay; why our departing employees leave, how supervisors fit into the picture, and what we can do to influence these decisions. This will require a study, performed by contract, to scope the problem and present recommended corporate actions to include design of a formal succession planning process and identification of continuing assessment tools (i.e. exit or other surveys). This will be completed in 2010, with follow on actions determined by the study outcome.

Metric: Award distribution USACE wide and by Division. Baseline during 2009 and determine target.

2. Interim measures need to be taken while the study is being completed. We know that there are some things that we can do now that will affect morale and thereby, retention.

a. Leaders at all levels must embrace the need to recognize our employees – to keep them working hard and happy. This includes fully implementing recognition programs for outstanding performance to include – for instance – the full range of monetary and honorary awards, weekly announcements of excellent work, publication of excellence to our stakeholders and the public, grassroots and peer recognition systems, and the like. It also includes using such authorized programs as retention incentives, flexibilities in pay setting to match private sector salaries to the greatest extent, telework and flexible work schedules, ensuring adequate tools and supplies, improving parking, implementing wellness programs, etc.

Metric: FHCS employee perception index. Target: Improve positive perception scores in the recognition and opportunity to get a better job questions by 5% per year.

b. CEHR will monitor other possible factors that affect morale and retention, to include pay pool funding levels, the dynamics of using two different personnel systems (GS and NSPS), and OCONUS-specific retention issues; and initiate action and/or studies and reviews as needed. We will pursue the possibility of resubmitting a previously prepared legislative proposal for “virtual” locality pay OCONUS with the HQDA staff. This program would mirror a current State Department program that provides credit for locality pay at the “rest of US” level toward retirement when an employee serves OCONUS during his/her “high three” years.

Metric: Turnover rates. Baseline in 2009 and determine target.

Metric: Improved retention of new employees. Reduce voluntary separations in MCOs by 10% each year, beginning in FY10.

3. Our employee development programs must be improved through actions in this HCP, Goal 3. The connection between employee development and retention is critical. We must provide interesting and challenging work to our top performers. Until the corporate program is designed to manage developmental assignments, each leader must identify, fund, and actively manage developmental opportunities. We must also ensure that developmental opportunities and training are provided to all our team mates so that they can develop to their full potential. But beyond just providing training, leaders must carefully design well-defined development plans for the most talented of our staff, offering additional developmental opportunities to our top performers so that we put emphasis on those that will be lynchpins of our future workforce.

4. We must continue our emphasis on enabling leaders. One major step that we can take is to relieve supervisors of some of the administrative burden of leading by hiring additional administrative staff. As mentioned previously, an estimate of the number of administrative staff is one for every 40 employees, to perform such duties as Corps of Engineers Financial Management System entries, creation and tracking of Requests for Personnel Action, tracking of suspenses and taskers, preparing documentation for awards and recognition, arranging for staff and all hands meetings, and so forth. This will cost approximately \$45,000 per administrative support staff (salary only, unburdened), depending on the location and the grade level. At a District of 500, this would add approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 to the cost of doing business.

5. Another step that we can take to assist leaders is to focus on a more fully developed enterprise level, corporate leader development program. We will take a number of actions:

a. We will seek improvements in systems supporting supervisor selections. We will explore, for instance, methods to incorporate peer evaluations and 360 degree assessments in selection panels, and create clear selection criteria for leadership jobs. We

will also assess other leadership evaluative tools and as needed, obtain approval for their use in selections. These evaluations will be complete NLT 30 September 2010.

b. We must enable our leaders to take care of their employees, mentor and communicate with them, and provide a healthy climate and work environment. We will expand our supervisory training, initially taking full advantage of the Civilian Education System and utilizing 100% of available quotas for FY09 and follow on years, obtaining additional quotas as possible. We will further evaluate other training and how it will fit into career paths, such as specific introductory supervisory skills training, annual refresher classes, or leadership development course that provides individualized feedback NLT September 2011.

c. We will hold supervisors accountable for good leadership. Initially, we will improve the Army standard supervisory performance objective for NSPS by the end of September, 2009 and propose changes to Army. We will explore ways to evaluate supervisors, to include employee engagement assessments, use of peer and subordinate surveys, and 360 degree evaluation processes – NLT 30 September 2010. A supervisor who cannot make the shift to strong leadership should be assigned to a technical non-supervisory position.

5. The Corps needs a robust mentorship program to augment knowledge management systems and enable transfer of knowledge from senior to junior employees. We cannot lose the knowledge that our senior members possess, particularly that residing in our potential retiree population. We will begin to design a USACE-unique mentorship program, using all available tools to include the Army's mentorship system, as well as the skill and knowledge of the USACE Communities of Practice (CoP) members that can assist in assessing and addressing knowledge transfer gaps. Some aspects of the program will include training and screening mentors to ensure they are qualified and enthusiastic. No later than 30 September 2009, CEHR will lead the development of a mandatory standard performance objective for all senior staff requiring mentorship of junior employees.

Goal 5. Build strong families.

The Army entered into the Army Family Covenant with the Families of its Soldiers, and places great value on our Families, recognizing them as the key to readiness and retention. At any point in time, USACE has approximately 800-1000 team members deployed around the globe, in 33 countries. In order to support this expeditionary workforce and provide for readiness and retention, the Corps will create family support programs that provide incentives to and care for families of employees who deploy to support Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) and disasters that the Corps is engaged in. The USACE Family Readiness (FR) Program will seek to mitigate family related areas that serve as detractors to deployment.

I. Barriers to building strong families

There are a number of barriers that we must address if we are to build strong Families.

While the military culture is to look to the employer for family assistance, civilian employees are not accustomed to asking employers for this assistance and may even see it as an intrusion. FR programs must consider this difference.

Army and DoD have built FR programs that are suited perfectly to the military family but have not yet begun to develop programs and tools that are applicable to civilians.

In some areas, such as casualty management, the applicability of Army and DoD guidance to civilians is not clear. Parts of the program must be built from scratch.

Funding for Soldier FR programs is built into budgets for installations and rear detachments, but no special funding has been made available for commands to create and implement FR programs for civilians.

USACE employees and their families are not typically located on camps, posts, or stations where existing services for military might be available.

II. USACE Actions, To Date.

USACE has made some advancements in the FR Program development.

1. Three FR Workshops have been held to bring together wisdom on FR programs from across the command. As a result of the collective information we created four Project Delivery Teams to work on portions of the process (pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment, casualty management, and the Army Family Action Plan). We have many policies in draft, and goals and program objectives established. During the most recent FR Workshop, we created a Mission Statement:

Establish a uniform Family Readiness Network (FRN) strong enough to decrease family concerns in support of deployment.

2. An Executive Steering Group was formed to provide program advisory services and oversight, and a FR Program Manager was hired in February 2009 to lead program efforts.

3. USACE has established partnerships with the Army, DoD, Army Materiel Command, and State Department in order to share ideas and build stronger programs that can serve as models for other agencies. We are now participating in an interagency forum on family programs for civilians.

4. Many Districts and Divisions have begun grassroots FR programs and in some cases, resourced them and hired staff. The Engineer Inspector General reviewed the FR programs in the Districts and will publish a report in the spring of 2009 that will inform further program action.

5. USACE has created a web site for FR that is in its beginning stages.
6. We established a web site to collect Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) issues (and submitted five), identified delegates to the 2009 AFAP conference, and succeeded in having one of our issues accepted into those to be studied by the Army.

III. Planned actions.

1. Program mission statement, goals and objectives are below. USACE will begin to determine appropriate metrics for determining our progress and will publish these in the next iteration of the HCP.

Goal 1: Institutionalize a sustainable level of funding, staff, technology and other support for the FRN

- Objectives: Create an FRO and staff at Headquarters.
- Establish Division Community Support Coordinators.
- Establish an appropriate FRN budget.
- Establish USACE-wide FRN.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of HQUSACE, Division, Districts, Centers and Labs.

Goal 2: Establish USACE standard service requirements with additional augmentation at Division/Districts/Centers

Objectives:

- Leverage Family Readiness best practices.
 - Develop a process to identify and share best practices in and outside USACE
 - Partner with other military and non-military commands and agencies that have deployed employees.
- Establish baseline services for the USACE FRN for specified funding support for families and those injured.

Goal 3: Establish an effective Communication Process between employees, families, and USACE

Objectives:

- Develop a process to identify deployed employees and designated families and their locations in order to inform, educate, update, and respond to families.
- Develop FRN communications and marketing resources to include family handbooks with customized information (hardcopy and web), and other resources such as magnets and links to other Army resources.

- Develop a USACE standardized protocol for casualty management. Also, augment Department of Defense and Army guidance and assure effective dissemination of protocol thru a network of trained POCs.
- Develop a two-way feedback process to identify needs and requirements (may include a survey) and deterrents to family readiness.

2. The Army created 50 Community Support Coordinators (CSC) and placed them across CONUS, approximately one in each state, to provide service to remotely located families – primarily focused on Guard and Reserve employees. Aggressive Corps action resulted in ten of these CSCs being assigned to USACE Divisions and the headquarters, and will help build the FR program for civilians. These will be in place during the spring of 2009.

3. USACE will create a body of guidance and policy associated with FR, and post it on the USACE FR web page. Guidance will be issued incrementally, on a quarterly basis, over the life of this HCP.

IV. Metrics.

1. Fill rate for deployed jobs reaches 95%
2. Improved survey results in workforce willingness to deploy and perception of family support in feedback process.
3. Publish command-wide guidance for Army Family Action Plan in USACE by 31 October 2009.
4. Publish guidance for all aspects of civilian deployment relating to families, to include pre deployment, post deployment, deployment, and casualty management by 30 September 2009.
5. Work with DA to obtain Community Support Coordinator (CSC) positions to support USACE at Division headquarters and place two by 31 January 2009. Place balance of seven and one at headquarters by 30 September 2009.

Conclusion

Time to fill jobs in USACE is already on the rise. FY 2008 time to fill was 47 days; during the first quarter of FY 2009, it increased to 49 days. During January 2009, it was at 56 days and February 2009, 51 days. As we put additional emphasis on hiring more people, without any change in methods and practices, we must expect this trend to continue. The number of unfilled positions will increase, resulting in a shortage of personnel across USACE, particularly in the MCOs. And, that means we will not be able to get the work done – not the work of the Nation, not the work of the Army, and not the work we expect our leaders to accomplish to develop and manage our workforce. The lack of leadership in conjunction with a turn in the economy will result in lower retention that will contribute to the inability to do the work. The result will be a downward spiral in productivity and staffing.

We have laid out the case for change in this discussion and in the strategies we believe must be addressed. We must recognize that completion of individual actions may not fully satisfy the need for a corporate strategy that knits together the goals cohesively and enables us to effectively hire, move, develop, and utilize people to get the mission done.

As Albert Einstein said, insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. The work of the Corps has risen dramatically, yet the investment in human capital has not kept pace – and support to the mission, particularly as regards recruiting, retaining, and developing disciplined people – must match mission size and expectations. If we fail to look to bold new solutions at this most critical juncture, we must expect, at best, to preserve the status quo in our processes and lose ground in results; and at worst, to fall behind in building the Corps to last.

Appendix A**Schedule and Milestones**

The following schedule contains the actions we have identified in order for USACE to continue to build strong in human capital.

Action	Steps	Milestone
1. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	Hire a corporate recruiter to lead efforts for national level aggressive recruitment through use of 21 st century tools	NLT 30 April 2009
2. Fully utilize Army's Civilian Education System (CES) quotas for USACE.	Put system in place to manage quotas	NLT 30 April 2009
3. Improve USACE-wide hiring.	Review, coordinate and simplify the Corporate Recruitment and Selection Procedures that apply to our senior leaders	NLT 31 May 2009
4. Develop process for evaluation of NSPS Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) employees	Review and issue guidance.	NLT 31 May 2009
5. Improve Pay Pool Process.	Convene a Project Delivery Team to examine lessons learned, evaluate improvements in the process, and make recommendations to the leadership	NLT 31 May 2009
6. Utilize reemployed annuitants as mentors.	Add addendum to position description of all reemployed annuitants to require each to mentor at least one junior individual in the organization; develop a mandatory performance objective to measure their success	Prepare and issue the PD addendum and mandatory objective NLT 31 May 2009
7. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	Request approval for increase of relocation incentives to attract candidates to service in	NLT 30 June 2009

Action	Steps	Milestone
	OCO positions	
8. Conduct NSPS training.	Command-wide training must continue, with a goal to reach all employees and leaders with lessons learned from the first two rating cycles under NSPS, writing SMART objectives, and evaluating performance. CEHR will lead a team to consolidate and evaluate lessons learned, develop train-the-trainer sessions and deliver them to a cadre of MSC and District trainers, who will in turn complete training of all employees	NLT 30 June 2009
9. Evaluate performance objectives.	CEHR will lead a team to review a sampling of performance objectives, provide feedback to leaders of evaluated objectives, and develop courses of action to improve the process	NLT 31 August 2009
10. Conduct training in workforce planning for managers and supervisors.	Develop training materials and hold workforce planning train the trainer sessions	Begin NLT 4Q FY 2009
11. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	Explore the possibility of funding for a professional marketing firm to tell the Corps story to potential candidates	NLT 30 September 2009
12. Deploy ATMP across USACE.	ICW non-ATMP Divisions develop and implement deployment plan	NLT 30 September 2009
13. Improve management of training programs.	Where possible, hire full time training coordinators at District and Division levels. These positions should be closely aligned to the CEHR assets at the Division for advice, guidance, and oversight	CEHR will prepare a model position description for these positions and issue NLT 30 September 2009

Action	Steps	Milestone
14. Improve communications USACE-wide regarding training and developmental opportunities to include Leadership Development Programs.	CEHR will enhance the current website to provide additional information and guidance	NLT 31 December 2009
15. Improve the Army standard supervisory performance objective for NSPS and propose changes to Army.		NLT 30 September 2009
16. CEHR will lead the development of a mandatory standard performance objective for all senior staff requiring mentorship of junior employees.		NLT 30 September 2009
17. Conduct longitudinal study.	Benchmark other government agencies and organizations as well as large private firms to discover the most effective programs and apply them to the Corps; consider impact of organizational structure and possible standardization of position descriptions /performance objectives at top levels	NLT 30 September 2009
18. Establish and lead Project Delivery Team (PDT) to explore whether national level funding should be provided for hiring incentives such as repayment of student loans, or recruitment, relocation and retention incentives.	Evaluate impact and make recommendation to leadership	NLT 31 December 2009
19. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	ICW leadership, study the use of the Gallup Leadership Strengths Interview as a selection	NLT 31 December 2009

Action	Steps	Milestone
	tool, explore other available evaluative tools, and select a tool	
20. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	<p>Develop and implement a recruitment toolkit and improve website capabilities for employment</p> <p>Explore application of Alternate Forms of Competition approved under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), to include assessment boards, alternate certification, and exceptional performance promotions</p> <p>Identify method to share best practices</p>	<p>NLT 30 Jun 2010</p> <p>ICW leadership CEHR will make a decision on usage NLT 30 June 2010</p> <p>Implement NLT 30 September 2010</p>
21. Explore methods to incorporate peer evaluations and 360 degree assessments in selection panels, and create clear selection criteria for leadership jobs; assess other leadership evaluative tools and as needed, obtain approval for their use in selections.		NLT 30 September 2010
22. Explore ways to evaluate supervisors, to include employee engagement assessments, use of peer and subordinate surveys, and 360 degree evaluation processes.		NLT 30 September 2010
23. Form PDT to determine how to relieve supervisors of some of their administrative burden such as Corps of Engineers Financial Management	Determine extent of administrative burden and recommend solutions	NLT 31 December 2010

Action	Steps	Milestone
System entries, creation and tracking of Requests for Personnel Action, tracking of suspenses and taskers, preparing documentation for awards and recognition, arranging for staff and all hands meetings, etc.		
24. Improve USACE-wide hiring.	<p>Benchmark corporate and other agency programs for recruiting to find efficiencies and process improvements</p> <p>Develop survey of employees (may be exit survey, entrance survey, survey of workforce) to determine why they take a position with USACE, why they stay, why they leave, and how they fit their positions</p>	<p>Complete NLT 31 December 2010 and implement changes NLT 30 September 2011</p> <p>NLT 31 December 2010</p>
25. Design a formal succession planning process. Identification of continuing assessment tools (i.e. exit or other surveys).	Benchmark with other agencies; identify assessment tools (i.e. exit or other surveys)	NLT 31 December 2010
26. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	Monitor fill time and report to the leadership through the Directorate Management Review process	Ongoing; During 2010, we will review the fill time and determine whether to pursue contract support for operating level civilian human resources
27. Conduct retention study	Scope the problem and present recommended corporate actions to include design of a formal succession planning process and identification of continuing assessment tools (i.e. exit or other surveys)	31 December 2010
28. Evaluate current available training programs and policies to include	Complete reviews, update training requirements, develop and modify current	NLT 30 September 2011

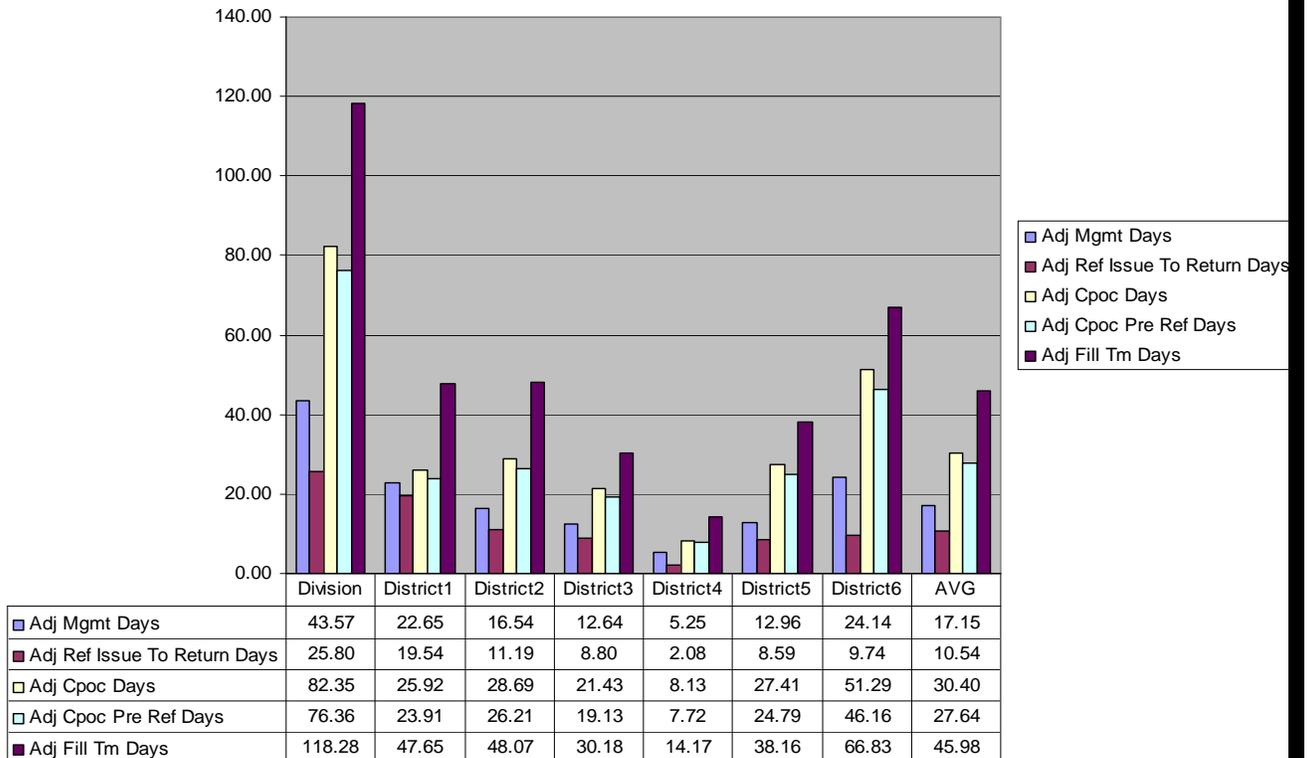
Action	Steps	Milestone
Leadership Development programs.	training offerings and policies	
29. Evaluate other training and how it will fit into career paths, such as specific introductory supervisory skills training, annual refresher classes, or leadership development course that provides individualized feedback.		NLT 30 September 2011
30. Improve USACE-wide recruiting.	<p>Request and press DoD and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for noncompetitive conversion authority for Schedule A appointees returning from Iraq or Afghanistan</p> <p>Set the standard for changing the culture to aggressively recruit for our positions</p> <p>As data supports it, request direct hire authority through Department of Army from either DoD or OPM</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
31. CEHR will incorporate additional guidance requiring that leader performance in performance management be considered in the rating process.	Raters must be held accountable for preparing sound, SMART objectives and for evaluating employee performance against those objectives consistent with the guidance provided for each performance evaluation system; higher level reviewers must also be held accountable for ensuring that raters apply the guidelines consistently and appropriately	Ongoing
32. Ensure that each supervisor is rated fairly on	Analyze Pay Pool results	Ongoing

Action	Steps	Milestone
the Army standard supervisory NSPS performance objective (modified for USACE).		
33. All employees have an IDP.	Using ATMP, leaders must ensure that all employees have an IDP; communication must take place at least twice annually between leaders and employees about their personal development plans	Ongoing
34. Leaders identify developmental and cross training opportunities.	Solicit developmental and cross training opportunities from across the Corps and published on CEHR website	Ongoing
35. Monitor other possible factors that affect morale and retention, to include pay pool funding levels, the dynamics of using two different personnel systems (GS and NSPS), and OCONUS-specific retention issues; and initiate action and/or studies and reviews as needed.		Ongoing
36. Institutionalize a sustainable level of funding, staff, technology and other support for the Family Readiness Network (FRN).	<p>Create a Family Readiness Office and Staff at Headquarters</p> <p>Establish Division Community Support Coordinators</p> <p>Establish an appropriate FRN budget</p> <p>Establish USACE-wide FRN</p> <p>Clearly define roles and responsibilities of HQUSACE, Division,</p>	

Action	Steps	Milestone
<p>37. Establish USACE standard service requirements with additional augmentation at Division/Districts/Centers</p>	<p>Districts, Centers and Labs</p> <p>Develop a process to identify and share best practices in and outside USACE</p> <p>Partner with other military and non-military commands and agencies that have deployed employees</p> <p>Establish baseline services for the USACE FRN for specified funding support for families and those injured</p>	
<p>38. Establish an effective Communication Process between employees, families, and USACE.</p>	<p>Develop process to identify deployed employees and designated families and their locations in order to inform, educate, update, and respond to families</p> <p>Develop FRN communications and marketing resources to include family handbooks with customized information</p> <p>Develop a USACE standardized protocol for casualty management; augment DoD and Army guidance and assure effective dissemination of protocol through a network of trained POCs</p> <p>Develop a two-way feedback process to identify needs and requirements and deterrents to family readiness</p>	

Appendix B Sample Report

Monthly Recruit/Fill Average Fill Times



Appendix C

810 Civil Engineering Occupational Series – Competency Assessments

Overview

A CMS pilot competency gap assessment was conducted on the Army 0810 Civil Engineers population in 2007. Of the 5,048 engineers in this group, there were 920 participants in the 2007 pilot test. A reassessment of the same sample was performed in 2008. Out of the 920 participants in 2007, 236 re-assessments were completed.

The 2007 results indicated a variety of gaps in all CMS competency groups. There were 47 competencies validated that had gaps – 4 business, 8 management, 3 planning, 10 professional, 20 technical and 2 technological ones. The 2008 results included 50 competencies validated that had gaps – 4 businesses, 7 management, 1 planning, 18 professional, 19 technical and 1 technological. Even though the number of 2008 participants in the re-assessments was lower the gaps identified in the first round re-affirmed.

Army is in the process of completing the 2008 census of the much larger population of Civil Engineers, which should provide far more comprehensive information for analysis of gaps and competencies. Given these points, a review of all data for this sample size was viewed to be incomplete but nevertheless evaluated to determine if further insights could be obtained. Later in 2008, when the data is available for the larger population of Civil Engineers, this additional detail will be reviewed to ensure there is a complete analysis of all relevant gaps. A summary of the competencies listed in 2007 vs. 2008 is attached at the end of this document for information.

In summary, the 2008 assessment validates most of what can be ascertained from an analysis of the 2007 assessment. However, the low numbers involved creates a cautionary approach for anything other than general approaches to closing gaps. A more specific approach will be outlined following an analysis of the more comprehensive assessment of both the 0810s as well as other occupational series later this year.

Overview - Gap Closure Evaluations based on Re-assessed Sample

Among the *non-technical* Strategic Thinking and Vision gaps were eliminated, and three new ones emerged which were Decision Making, Memory and Stress Tolerance. Among the *technical* competencies there were four gap closures. The four closed were Geotechnical Engineering, Hydraulic Engineering, Hydrology, and Institutional Environmental Engineering and Management. This is significant because these are critical technical competencies within the career program.

Given the numbers re-assessed these findings need to be further studied. When the data is available for the larger population of Civil Engineers, this additional detail will

be analyzed to identify technical gaps involving these disciplines. Gaps are noted in, general engineering competencies such as Building and Construction, Civil Engineering, Design and General Engineering have been highlighted, as well as very general technical competencies, such as Attention to Detail, Mathematical Reasoning and Memory. Hence, there are gaps in the Technical Competency group in both specific areas as well as general areas.

Findings on Gaps

The most significant increase in new competency gaps were within the Professional Competency group. There were a few small closures and small new gaps in the areas of Business, Management and Technological groups but the fact that there is a difference of eight in the Professional Competency category is worth examining. All ten of the original competencies validated in 2007 were revalidated and eight new ones emerged. The significance was the emergence of new gaps in this area.

The majority of gaps continue to fall into two categories; the need to hire staff due to projected attrition and the need for on board staff to achieve a higher proficiency level; that is, to move from their “as-is” proficiencies to “goal” level proficiencies. Hiring gaps are still present across all proficiency levels due to attrition, which indicates the emphasis should be on both hiring entry level and on board staff.

In analyzing the individual competencies and associated gaps, most of the gaps in both 2007 and 2008 involve proficiency levels 4 and 5. The majority of the people are generally currently at levels 3 and 4, with level 5 also often having a significant number. The fact that the largest gaps are in levels 4 and 5 rather than level 3 is to be expected since most people in level 3 probably feel that they are performing at least at the level required by their position. In contrast, those in levels 4 and 5 probably have more to do to be fully proficient at that level. In addition, you have those aspiring to reach the higher proficiency levels. The fact that most of the population is at level 3 and 4 is also not a surprise.

Those competencies with the largest gaps in 2007 were: Civil Engineering, Customer Service 1 and 2, Oral Communication, Personal Communication, Problem Solving, Program and Project Management, Relationship Management, Team Building, Teamwork, Technical Competence, Technical Credibility and Written Communication. The 2008 analysis also identified these same areas as the ones with some of the highest gaps. This not only highlights the fact that these areas must be addressed, but that we have not yet made much progress in those areas overall. Another point is that several of these – communication, team related items and relationships as well as overall technical competence and credibility fall into a few common areas.

Gap Closure Evaluation and Planning

To close those gaps require some *general actions* as well as some *specific actions*. As far as specific actions are concerned they will be determined based on the

additional information being obtained from the larger population of Civil Engineers. The analysis of the 2008 data will focus on an update of the items provided in the 2007 gap analysis plus will emphasize any new observations from the 2008 data as compared to the 2007 data

Among the approximately 5100 civil engineers in Army, 4700 of them are in USACE. Thus, many of the actions taken to close gaps are being initiated by the USACE National Competency Team. The goal is to implement a variety of strategies, evaluate their effectiveness and then pursue those that have the greatest impact on improving both the organizational and individual performance of civil engineers. For example, the focus on training, mentoring and coaching must be tied to improved effectiveness as well as increased competency levels. To do this we will evaluate future competency gaps to look for closure plus will put in place other metrics to measure our effectiveness. Based upon the review of 2007 vs. 2008 data it is too early and too small of a population to draw any conclusions concerning effectiveness of actions taken to date.

Many of the individual competency gaps identified are interrelated. This makes the closing of these gaps more of an umbrella approach than one that is targeted at individual elements within each competency group. Army's initial approach is therefore to address these as interrelated efforts. The strategies will work to close all of the gaps identified, not only the ones that may appear to be targeted. The individual competency gaps will be further addressed once the additional information is obtained later in 2008 from the more comprehensive assessment of the 0810 population that is in the process of entering their data. It is anticipated that this additional information will provide a clearer picture of our gaps.

To close the gaps related to hiring technical staff due to projected attrition, USACE continues to implement a more aggressive hiring strategy across their engineering and construction organization, which has a very large number of Civil Engineers. Direct hire authority and hiring incentives for a variety of engineering positions in New Orleans due to the significant shortage of experienced engineers. In addition to this specialized focus area all Districts were authorized through an Engineering and Construction Bulletin (ECB) 2008-13 dated 08 April 2008 to increase the emphasis on hiring engineers using a variety of incentives. Finally, USACE has developed a national recruitment strategy to target critical occupations. An analysis of USACE's workforce highlighted the need to recruit staff in certain critical areas – contracting, geotechnical engineering, hydraulic engineering and construction management. Three of these areas involve the 0810 series. A national team of leaders in geotechnical engineering, hydraulic engineering and construction management have been assembled to lead the recruiting efforts for these specific critical areas. The number of civil engineers increased from 5,048 in July 2007 to 5,126 in September 2008, a modest 1.5% increase. Not all of these civil engineers would have been in the above targeted engineering and construction organization but, given the attrition rate due to turnover and retirements, the fact that it is an increase at all is a positive factor. To close non-technical hiring gaps, the Army continues to recruit at all levels in all occupations. However, these strategies have only been in effect a short while, not long enough to see an impact yet.

In regard to moving from the “as-is” levels of proficiency to the “goal” levels of proficiency, the following areas are being emphasized in order to close these gaps across all technical areas the *general gap closure actions pursued* are:

- Training in both technical fields and non-technical fields continues to be a high priority and is used to close gaps in proficiency levels. This training comes from a variety of sources – informal on-the-job training, formal training, USACE PROSPECT training classes, long term training and development, university classes, professional society forums, training with industry, etc. This will address issues in the technical as well as professional areas.
- Mentoring and coaching by senior staff and experienced staff also occur throughout the Army to assist careerists with their development. Mentoring is a key strategy in closing gaps related to proficiency levels plus is also relevant to closing both technical and non-technical gaps. This will address issues in the technical as well as professional areas.
- The USACE strategy to “Refresh the CoPs” is continuing. CoPs are Communities of Practice within USACE. This effort is concentrated on ensuring that our CoPs improve our ability to share knowledge and lessons learned. This will enhance our ability to mentor all staff in the knowledge and skills required to be successful in their job performance. The actions associated with this initiative are still in development but some items are in the process of being completed. These include increased emphasis on using the Technical Excellence Network (TEN), use of the new enterprise lessons learned system, and periodic meetings and telecons with the CoPs.
- Increased emphasis on certifications and registration. USACE has recently developed a certification program for Project Managers (PM). This will cover not only some of the technical competency gaps, but also the management competencies. Many PMs are within the 0810 series.
- The CP-18 Planning Board met in March 2008. They have identified 3 goals, all of which are relevant in closing the identified gaps. Goal 1 is to recruit the best talent to serve as technical experts and leaders of the future. Goal 2 is to develop a diverse world-class workforce with a reputation for technical and leadership excellence. Goal 3 is to create an exciting and challenging career experience that enables lifetime learning and rewards technical and leadership excellence.
- CP-18 has initiated the ACTEDS Refresh effort. As part of this CP-18 will develop Professional Development Maps (PDMs) for all elements of CP-18. PDMs are the new Army standard roadmap for Career Programs. It features standard Army inputs for CES, NSPS, etc.; career opportunities; common core and functional competency requirements; training requirements and opportunities; and CES Information. The information will be arranged by pay bands. One of the initial areas will be the Civil Engineering 0810 occupation. PDM’s have been linked to the CMS competency library to help unify the way forward.

- Development of metrics to drive performance that will close gaps. The update of USACE's Campaign Goals includes an update of the associated metrics. Critical metrics are in development that will enhance technical competency within USACE. The first one is to perform the right amount of work on the right type of projects using in-house engineering resources. This will allow staff to develop both their technical and non-technical skills. Other metrics being considered include professional certification and registration; developmental assignments on USACE "core" mission activities; training budget execution; and involvement in professional organizations. Other metrics to address non-technical areas are also currently being developed.

Implementation of the National Technical Competency Strategy (NTCS) continues. The main purpose of this strategy is to identify technical competency gaps and develop strategies to close those gaps. Both recruitment and proficiency level gaps are included in this strategy. The National Technical Competency Team (NTCT) began their work in October 2007 and was originally scheduled to complete their analysis and recommendations in calendar year 2008. However, despite the fact that a variety of items have caused some delays in this schedule, the NTCT is still actively engaged in addressing these issues. The NTCT has completed their evaluation of USACE's future mission and workload levels, the role the technical resources will play in execution of the mission and how USACE should be organized to deliver those services. In addition, USACE held an External Workshop with leaders in private industry and other governmental agencies to discuss technical competency challenges and best practices. All of these steps to date have been included in Chapters 1 and 2 of a draft NTCT report, which is ready for review by USACE MSCs and leadership. The NTCT is currently awaiting CMS data on the larger population of 0810s, as well as other technical occupations. Upon receipt of that information an analysis will be performed to determine those gaps and ways to close them. The NTCT will also provide recommendations to the USACE Human Capital Strategy under development, on recruiting, developing and retaining technical competencies.

810 Engineering series – Competency Assessments

Educated, Trained, Competent, Experienced, and Certified

COMPTITLE	Competency	2007	2008
Accountability	Business		●●●
Business Acumen	Business	●●●	
Influencing and Negotiating	Business	●●●	●●●
Partnering	Business	●●●	●●●
Problem Solving	Business	●●●	●●●
Conflict Management	Management	●●●	●●●
Financial Management	Management	●●●	●●●
Leveraging Diversity and Cultural Awareness	Management	●●●	
Project Management	Management	●●●	●●●
Self-Management	Management	●●●	●●●
Teaching Others	Management	●●●	●●●
Team Building	Management	●●●	●●●
Teamwork	Management	●●●	●●●
Planning and Evaluating 1	Planning	●●●	●●●
Strategic Thinking	Planning	●●●	
Vision	Planning	●●●	
Continual Learning	Professional	●●●	●●●
Creative Thinking	Professional	●●●	●●●
Creativity and Innovation	Professional	●●●	●●●
Customer Service	Professional	●●●	●●●
Customer Service 2	Professional	●●●	●●●
Decisiveness	Professional		●●●
External Awareness	Professional	●●●	●●●
Flexibility	Professional		●●●
Integrity and Honesty	Professional		●●●
Integrity/Honesty 2	Professional		●●●
Interpersonal Skills	Professional	●●●	●●●
Interpersonal Skills 2	Professional	●●●	●●●
Oral Communication	Professional	●●●	●●●
Reading	Professional		●●●
Resilience	Professional		●●●
Self Esteem	Professional		●●●
Service Motivation	Professional		●●●
Written Communication	Professional	●●●	●●●
Attention to Detail	Technical	●●●	●●●
Building and Construction	Technical	●●●	●●●
Business Management	Technical	●●●	●●●
Civil Engineering	Technical	●●●	●●●
Decision Making	Technical		●●●
Design	Technical	●●●	●●●
General Engineering	Technical	●●●	●●●
Geotechnical Engineering	Technical	●●●	
Hydraulic Engineering	Technical	●●●	
Hydrology	Technical	●●●	
Institutional Environmental Engineering and Management	Technical	●●●	
Learning	Technical	●●●	●●●
Mathematical Reasoning	Technical	●●●	●●●
Memory	Technical		●●●
Mental Visualization	Technical	●●●	●●●
Organizational Awareness	Technical	●●●	●●●
Personal Communication	Technical	●●●	●●●
Program/Project Management	Technical	●●●	●●●
Reasoning	Technical	●●●	●●●
Relationship Management	Technical	●●●	●●●
Stress Tolerance	Technical		●●●
Technical Competence	Technical	●●●	●●●
Technical Credibility	Technical	●●●	●●●
Information Management - General	Technological	●●●	●●●
Technology Management 4	Technological	●●●	