

Key Strategic Directions identified in the Bureau Workforce Plan

[The USGS Bureau Workforce Plan \(2015-2020\)](#) was released in January, 2015. The plan described attributes of the current USGS workforce, discussed internal and external drivers that will affect our future workforce, noted some key gaps between our current and anticipated future workforces, and listed actions that to be taken – at the bureau level - to address those gaps. The goal for doing so is to provide information, tools, and directions that help USGS have “the right people, in the right place, at the right time” to accomplish our mission.

One of the specific actions in the Bureau Workforce Plan is a requirement that all USGS Centers and Offices have an updated workforce plan that is consistent with the bureau plan. Being consistent means that all Center/Office workforce plans must address how they have considered or plan to make progress on the key strategic directions highlighted in the bureau plan, which are summarized below. The intent of requiring consistency is to align local workforce planning with Regional, Mission Area and bureau-level planning to the degree it is applicable, while also recognizing that variations will exist for particular Offices or Centers.

The key strategic directions to be addressed are:

Workforce Flexibility and a Multi-sector Workforce [*pages 7-9, 15-16 of the bureau plan*]: A multi-sector workforce is one that includes a mix of federal employees in permanent and other-than-permanent appointments, as well as Scientists Emeriti, contractors, non-paid interns, volunteers. Such a flexible workforce can help a USGS adapt to changing science and operational priorities, internal and external funding uncertainties, and a generally restrained economic climate in the U.S. that negatively impacts the bureau’s budget. Where possible, Centers and Offices should use a multi-sector approach to meeting their workforce needs.

Increased Diversity [*page 9 of the bureau plan*]: The USGS recognizes the value and business necessity of building and maintaining a highly skilled, diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of our partners and stakeholders and the Nation. The wide array of perspectives that results from robust diversity (race, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical and mental ability) promotes innovation and mission success. However, USGS currently lacks diversity in the professional Natural Resources/Biological (400x) and Physical Science (13xx) series. In addition, in science technical positions, the percent of female employees is lower than the U.S. workforce benchmark. Employees with Targeted Disabilities are also low. Grade level disparity also exists between white males and other race, ethnic, and gender groups. Offices and Centers should address their current level of diversity and, if needed, identify ways to reduce barriers to increased diversity. There are no prescribed targets or quotas; rather understanding

the benchmarks can raise awareness of disparities and prompt greater consideration to diversity when making workforce decisions.

Capability to share staff resources – physically and virtually [*pages 14-15 of the bureau plan*]: Resource sharing is the ability to deploy agency expertise, either physically or virtually, to address emergency situations, emerging priorities, or disparities between workforce demand and funding at individual centers or offices, and even across the bureau. The USGS has a history of doing this effectively in response to emergency situations and major natural hazard events, but it occurs less often in normal operations. Centers and Offices should identify ways in which they can both share their own staff resources and use those elsewhere within USGS.

Succession Planning [*pages 19-20 of the bureau plan*]: Succession planning refers to finding or developing a group of qualified candidates who are ready for career opportunities and enhanced roles based on their educational attainment, work experience, or training. Given projected retirements and employee turnover in the next 5-10 years, succession planning is vital to assure a cadre of employees with the knowledge, skills, and willingness to compete for and step into key positions. The particular positions that require succession planning will vary among Centers and Offices, depending on strategic directions, critical functions, candidate pool or “pipeline”, and the “learning curve” for the skill sets needed.

Skills and Capabilities [*pages 12-13 of the bureau plan*]: USGS core science strengths span skills and capabilities in the areas of monitoring, assessment, modeling and decision support, mapping, research, data management, as well as functions that enable science like science integrity, financial management, information technology, human resources, and communications. There are additional skills and capabilities that exist and will be increasingly needed in the future. Those capabilities, described in the workforce plan are:

- Multi-disciplinary synthesis
- Entrepreneurship
- Adapting to New Technologies
- Landscape level Science

For Science Centers, the workforce plan should also address maintaining core science strengths and building more capability in these future skill/capabilities needs:

Additional guidance on workforce plan content (including how to get key demographic and diversity data for an Office or Center), recommended format, and a workforce plan template is available at the [USGS workforce plan web page](https://www2.usgs.gov/humancapital/sw/workforceplanning/workforcetoolkit.html)

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