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REDUCING THE EFFECT OF TURNOVER



REPORT BY: CHARLOTTE L BRADSHER
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FRANK BATTEN SCHOOL
of LEADERSHIP and PUBLIC POLICY

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To everyone else who has played a part, thank you, and I wish you all the best.

Sincerely,
CLB

Mandatory Disclaimer

The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other agency.

Honor Pledge

On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.

Charlotte Louise Bradsher

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Executive Summary

The Facilities Maintenance Services Office faces an increasing turnover rate, with negative consequences such as substantial costs, reduced productivity, and employee burnout. This report aimed to provide actionable solutions to tackle the issue and was commissioned by Liliya Emmet, the supervisor of the Central Resources Division (CRD). Several factors contribute to the escalating turnover rate, including the hiring freeze, an aging workforce, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The report identifies several policy alternatives proposed or implemented in different agencies to address the problem.

These alternatives aim to reduce the cost of turnover while enhancing productivity and reducing employee burnout. The report evaluates the alternatives based on cost, effectiveness, and administrative feasibility and considers the following options:

1. Status Quo: Increase the number of part-time employees from 2024 through 2028.
2. Succession Planning: Implement Succession Planning throughout the office to ensure a smooth transition and lower the time a position is vacant.
3. Centralization of Knowledge Management: Create a standardized practice for collecting institutional knowledge utilizing the FMS's internal database across all three divisions.

After careful analysis, the report recommends Succession Planning as the best approach for FMS. This alternative allows FMS to plan for turnovers by having employees backfill into positions, mitigating vacancy time, and enabling FMS to train employees for future positions. This approach enhances productivity and ensures that employees continuously learn, thereby reducing the negative impact of turnover on the FMS office.

Acronyms

CRD: Central Resources Division

DESD: Domestic Environmental and Safety Division

DOS: Department of State

FMS: Office of Facilities Maintenance Services

FMSD: Facilities Maintenance Services Division

GAO: Government Accountability Office

GSM: Office of General Services Management

OMB: White House Office of Management and Budget

RPM: Office of Real Property Management

Introduction

On my second day at the Facilities Maintenance Services Office (FMS), I had the opportunity to attend a retirement ceremony for the Facilities Maintenance Services Division Chief. Little did I know, this vacancy would remain unfilled for sixty-one days, highlighting the issue of retirements and vacancies that are becoming increasingly common within the Department of State and other government agencies. These lost costs are a challenge that offices must address, especially as separations and retirement continue.

I had the privilege of working with Liliya Emmet, who serves as the branch supervisor for the Facilities Maintenance Service's Central Resource Division (CRD). The CRD was created to provide administrative support, management, and property accountability services to the FMS (DoS, n.d.). As supervisor, Liliya is responsible for managing the FMS budget and fiscal operations, as well as developing contracts related to operations and maintenance for domestic buildings (DoS, n.d.), given the federal government's extensive on maintaining a productive and effective team.

Problem Statement

Like many other federal offices and agencies, the Department of State's Office of Facilities Maintenance Services is grappling with escalating turnover rates. Such elevated rates inflict consequences, including but not limited to substantial cost, depleted productivity, and employee burnout.

Scale and Scope

The federal workforce has dwindled despite a two-thirds increase in the U.S. population over the last 50 years (Partnership for Public Service, n.d.; Hill, 2020). Additionally, the number of college graduates pursuing government jobs has decreased by 15 percent from 2001 to 2017 (Brook, 2019). Regardless of the continuous need for a strong federal workforce, the applicant pool is depleting, causing current employees to burn out, and resulting in high costs and inefficiencies. Furthermore, according to the client the FMS office has yet to be able to benefit from hybrid and teleworking due to all employees being essential workers. While the Biden-Harris Administration has offered some solutions, these initiatives affect FMS employees less than other federal offices.

The scope of this project is limited to the FMS office. Therefore, this report aims to provide actionable alternatives that the FMS office can incorporate into their daily operations without requiring approval from the Department of State. In addition, increasing recruitment efforts is not investigated in this report due to the complexity of the federal hiring process.

Causes for Turnover within the Federal Government

Over the past five years, the United States government has faced a significant challenge in retaining federal civilian employees, with high rates of turnover being reported (GovExec, 2018). First, exploring the underlying causes of this issue, highlighting three factors that contribute to high turnover rates: 1) the hiring freeze in 2017, 2) the COVID-19 pandemic, and 3) the aging demographic of the federal government. The second section will delve into the potential consequences of these unresolved effects of high turnover rates, including burnout, low productivity, and further exacerbation of turnover rates.

2017 Hiring Freeze

In January 2017, former President Trump issued a government wide hiring freeze on federal civil employees, with exceptions for heads of departments and agencies due to public safety and national security concerns (Office of Inspector General, 2019; Eilperton, 2017). Despite the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) lifting the freeze in April of that year, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo continued it for an additional 13 months until May 2018. This extended freeze had significant consequences, as the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Human Resources reported a vacancy rate of approximately 17 percent for civil service employees during the freeze, which increase by three percentage points (Office of Inspector General, 2019). Overall, the hiring freeze had a notable impact on the Department of State, and the decision to extend it for more than a year resulted in further complications and challenges for the agency.

COVID-19 pandemic

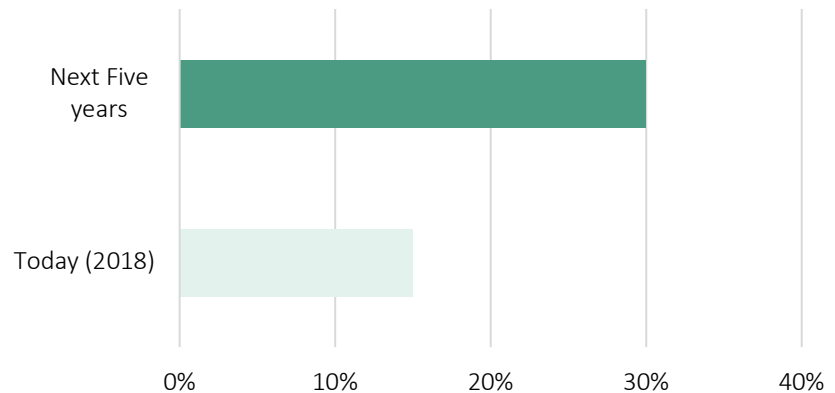
The federal workforce experienced significant changes due to the hiring freeze in 2018 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic's added stress and anxiety negatively impacted work satisfaction for many federal employees, despite being able to work from home (DeBerry, 2022). The Facilities Maintenance Services Office's essential workers were required to be present during the pandemic to operate and maintain domestic facilities putting them at increased risk. The Biden Administration's plan to recover the federal workforce after the first COVID-19 wave did not account for essential workers, making it difficult for offices with a large percentage of essential workers to benefit from teleworking, alternative work schedules, increased technology adoption, and talent retention (U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2021).

Aging Demographic

The age distribution of the federal workforce has shifted over time, with a growing proportion of older employees and a decrease in the total number of federal employees. Twenty years ago, the over-60 population only represented 5.7 percent of the federal workforce (Bubl , 2019). As of 2018, according to the data collected from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the over-60 population makes up 14 percent of the workplace, while the

under-30 population has consistently been about 7 percent of the workforce (Bubl , 2019). This trend raises concerns about filling the positions when the over-60 population retires (Bubl , 2019). The experience of career federal employees who have stayed for decades is also at risk of being lost. Their replacements will not have adequate time to acquire the skills to successfully fill the positions (Bubl , 2019). In addition, the Congressional Budget Office released that the average age of the federal workplace is 47 years old, while the private sector average age is 42 (Lewis & Cho, 2011; Bubl , 2019). According to a 2020 report by Brookings, one-third of the federal workforce will be eligible for retirement between 2020 and 2025, highlighting the urgent need for workforce planning and retention strategies (Hill, 2020). Based on data collected by the OPM, Government Executive reported in 2018 that 14 percent of federal employees were eligible to retire. As shown in Figure 1, this percentage is projected to increase to 30 percent over the next five years (GovExec, 2018).

Figure 1: Retirement Eligibility for Federal Employees



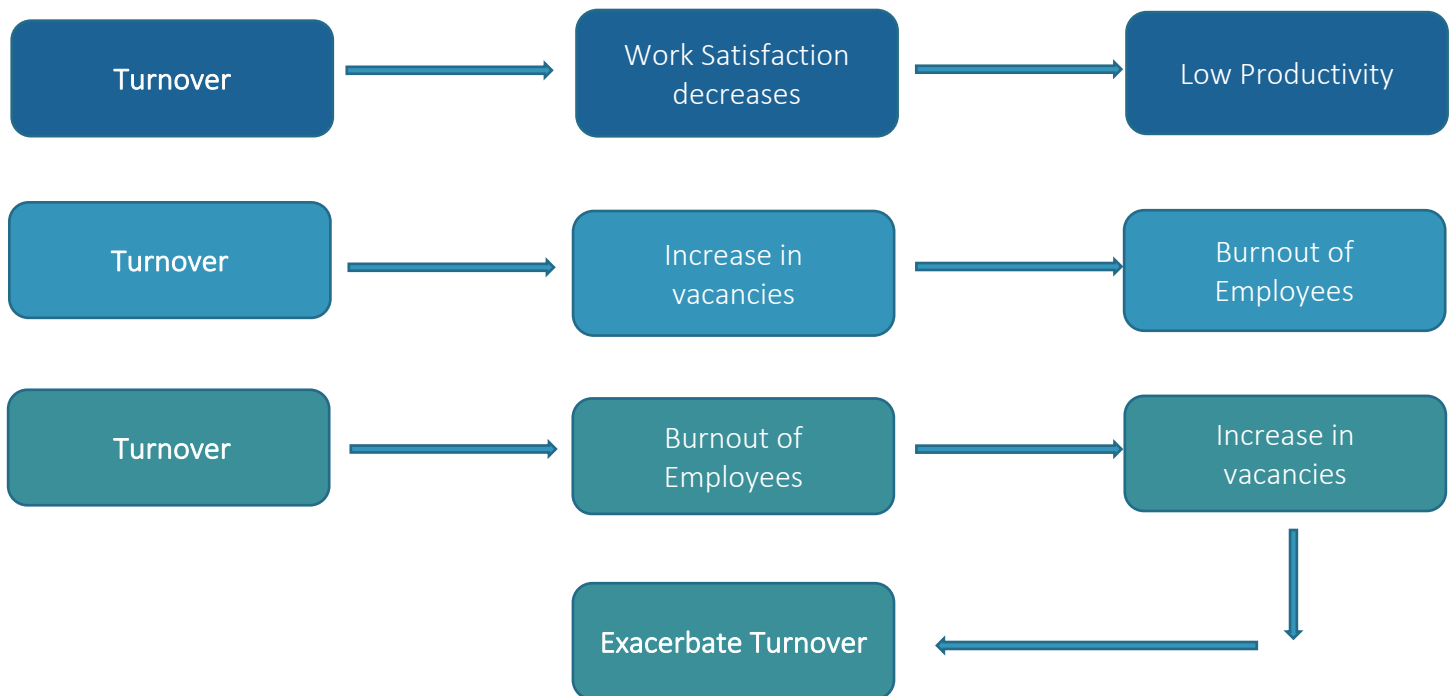
Source: GovExec. (2018, June 26). Federal Agencies Where Most Employees are Eligible to Retire. GovExec. <https://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2018/06/federal-agencies-where-most-employees-are-eligible-retire/149091/>

Consequences of Turnover within the Federal Government

Some consequence FMS might face if they do not find a solution to low retention in the office is:

1) Burnout 2) Low Productivity 3) Exacerbating Turnover.

Figure 2: Consequences of Turnover



The Effect of Burnout on Employees

Burnout is a debilitating condition that results from a combination of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion caused by excessive work demands (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, n.d.). When employees are overwhelmed with their workload, they can experience burnout, leading to various adverse outcomes (Li, 2020). One common coping mechanism for burnt-out employees is emotionally and cognitively distancing themselves from their colleagues (Li, 2020). Creating interpersonal conflicts at work, negatively impact their ability to be considerate of others and regulate their emotions (Li, 2020). Consequently, the productivity and efficiency of burnt-out employees can decrease significantly.

To prevent burnout and its negative consequences, federal employees must effectively manage their workload, prioritize self-care, and seek support from colleagues and management (Li, 2020). However, factors such as increased retirements between 2020 and 2025 and past policies like hiring freezes have created burnout across agencies (Sullivan, 2020; Hill, 2020; McGregor, 2017), increasing the risk of burnout among federal employees. Hiring freezes often result in a heavier

workload for existing employees, leading to frustration, stress, and burnout. In addition, increased workloads can cause valuable employees to retire earlier than planned or voluntarily leave, resulting in a high turnover rate (GTM, 2022; Sullivan, 2020; McGregor, 2017). Moreover, burnout may lead to employees making decisions based on stress, incentivizing them to take shortcuts that could have negative consequences (Sullivan, 2020; McGregor, 2017).

In the past, the federal government implemented hiring freezes to control workforce size and reduce costs (Priest, 1990; States, 1982). However, evaluations conducted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) on hiring freezes in the 1970s and 1980s showed long-run costs and inefficiencies that affected the agency's mission (Priest, 1990; States, 1982). Lt. Evan and Lt. Hatch conducted a study on Hiring Freeze Outcomes at the U.S. Army Mission and Installation Contracting Command (MICC), which found that productivity decreases during a hiring freeze (Evans & Hatch, 2014). However, further research is necessary to understand the extent of the impact and the potential for voluntary turnover (Evans & Hatch, 2014). More public data should be provided to researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of hiring freezes. Currently, Lt. Evan and Lt. Hatch's analysis is the closest public evaluation of the ineffectiveness of a hiring freeze on productivity. Therefore, it is critical to evaluate the effects of burnout during hiring freezes, identify the cost of burnout, and explore ways to prevent and manage it in the future.

Low Productivity

An increase in turnover rate can significantly impact an office's productivity, leading to performance losses (Shaw, 2011). In his 2011 report, Shaw summarized the findings of thirty-five studies examining the relationship between turnover rates and organizational productivity across various industries. The results of these studies showed that turnover rates have a negative impact on productivity and profitability due to the creation of communication gaps within the organization.

The negative impact of turnover rates is most pronounced when there is a high concentration of newcomers (Hausknecht et al., 2009). Therefore, offices with a significant turnover in a short period will be the least productive. Furthermore, low productivity within an office or agency indicates a failure to optimize the skills and competencies of employees, resulting in inefficient use of resources and funds (Saviom, 2021). Therefore, identifying the reasons for low productivity is crucial to reducing resourcing costs.

Apart from turnover, low productivity can arise in an office due to other factors. For instance, supervisors may assign low-priority and mundane tasks to highly skilled employees, proving counterproductive and demotivating for them (Saviom, 2021). Additionally, employees may need more motivation to work towards the office or agency's goals, which could be due to being overworked and experiencing early stages of burnout (Saviom, 2011). Therefore, addressing these

factors is essential to ensure employees work to their full potential and feel motivated toward the organization's objectives.

Low-productive offices risk receiving reduced funds in the next fiscal year, hindering their operations. The agency budget process starts a year in advance, with agencies creating their requests and submitting them to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (usagov, n.d.). After reviewing these requests, OMB prepares the President's budget proposal, which is submitted to Congress (usagov, n.d.). Congress has the final authority to approve or reject the budget request. Once the budget is approved, the agencies are responsible for distributing it to their bureaus, which, in turn, allocate funds to their respective divisions and offices. Sufficient funds are crucial for offices to maintain solid productivity levels. For instance, FMS competes for funds with sister offices such as Real Property Management (RPM) and Office of General Services Management (GSM). The competition for funding is intense, and smaller offices must demonstrate high productivity levels to justify their funding requirements and secure consistent or increased funding for the following year. By maintaining productivity levels, FMS can allocate more funds and achieve its goals as an office.

Exacerbating Turnover

Federal employees play a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operations of government agencies. In addition, when employees leave frequently, it can cause disengagement and prompt them to look for alternative employment opportunities (House, n.d.; Humanity, 2016). *The federal government hiring process can take an average of 100 days* (GoGovernment, n.d.). This delay can create a vacancy for at least 100 days, when other employees may have to take on additional workload. This situation can lead to burnout or low productivity among the remaining staff, exacerbating the turnover issue. To mitigate these challenges, agencies must prioritize retention efforts and streamline their hiring process.

Current Policy Initiatives

The Biden-Harris Administration has recognized the decline in the federal workforce and prioritized strengthening and empowering it through its Management Agenda Vision. A notable concern is the low number of young employees within the federal workforce, and the administration has stated its commitment to enhancing the quality of work for federal employees. They aim to achieve this by continuing flexible work arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as teleworking, alternative schedules, and increasing technology adoption (President's Management Council, 2021). To achieve their goals, the administration has developed a multi-year strategy that includes increasing the pay for federal employees by 4.6 percent, raising the minimum wage in the federal workforce to \$15 per hour, funding internship programs, recruiting from communities outside Washington, D.C Metro area, and providing additional funding for talent agencies, according to the President's Management Council (2021). These initiatives hope to attract and retain young talent and create a more flexible and inclusive work environment that empowers federal employees to perform their duties more effectively.

Evidence on Potential Solutions

In this section, we will examine solutions implemented by the federal government or institutions with similar constraints and evaluate their success. However, the major limitation of the literature collected is the need for more sufficient data from federal agencies, which has hindered further investigation of these resolutions. The solutions we will review in this section are utilizing part-time employment, succession planning and knowledge management. By examining the outcomes, we can gain insights into their effectiveness in improving organizational performance and overcoming adversities.

Utilizing Part-Time Career Federal Employees

Each agency is allocated a personnel ceiling by the Office of Management and Budget, which restricts the number of full-time positions available to each office (5 CFR § 340, n.d.). Consequently, it is uncommon for offices to create new full-time positions. To overcome this limitation, offices opt to create part-time positions since such positions only count as a fraction of a person within the agency's personnel ceiling (5 CFR § 340, n.d.). Once these positions are created, offices can fill them with part-time career employees entitled to various benefits such as retirement, life insurance, and health benefits (5 CFR § 340, n.d.). Part-time career employees work between 16 and 32 hours per week and can also work more than 32 hours, although not for two consecutive pay periods (5 CFR § 340, n.d.). After filling the position, the office is required to report the purpose of the position and include it in their personnel count (5 CFR § 340, n.d.). Although the Office of Management and Budget plans the number of full-time employees, offices that create part-time positions are responsible for paying the employees. While adding part-time positions can increase the number of employees available to delegate tasks, it can also impact the office's project budget.

Outcomes of Succession Planning

Succession planning has been found to be effective in ensuring a smooth transition of information (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). This is achieved through forecasting and planning which involves identifying employees with high potential and developing them for their next role (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1990; Robinson, 2017; Yawson, 2019). The development process can create a positive return on investment by decreasing replacement costs (Barnett & Davis, 2008; Titzer et al., 2013). A study conducted by Kariuki and Ochiri (2017) found that succession planning; human resource planning, mentoring and benchmark programs have a positive and significant effect on the organization. However, it is important to note that most of the literature only has qualitative data, and case studies are applied mainly to non-government agencies. Private sectors have fewer constraints compared to government entities. Nonetheless, case studies run for nursing units are

better applicable to a government office due similar turnover rates and budget constraints that both entities face (Titzer et al., 2013).

Outcomes of Knowledge Management

The United States needs a comprehensive knowledge management system across federal government agencies. The concerns about increasing retirements and separations make capturing and maintaining institutional knowledge vital. Research confirms that knowledge management enhances productivity (Gavrikova, 2016; Kianto et al., 2018). Understanding the organization's culture, technology capabilities, and leadership is crucial for leveraging knowledge management for productivity (Girard & McIntyre, 2010)—the findings in Kianto et. Al. (2018) reports that knowledge creation and utilization impact employee positivity statistically significantly. However, knowledge management does not decrease the time spent on a task (Constantinescu, 2009).

The Department of Air Force and the Department of Navy pioneered knowledge management systems in the Armed Forces. Technological capabilities are also crucial for effective knowledge management. For instance, the Air Force utilized knowledge repositories and knowledge access to store documentation with explicit knowledge that can be retrieved when needed (Asoh, Belardo, & Neilson, 2002). These practices give the Air Force opportunities to share and disseminate. The Navy established the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI), providing an all-encompassing information and communications technology system in collaboration with Electronic Data System (Bennet & Porter, 2003). The NMCI granted worldwide access to intellectual resources, enabling the Naval enterprise to tap into a network of people, information, and resources available in government, corporations, and academia (Bennet & Porter, 2003). The NMCI encouraged the other services to incorporate knowledge management into their culture. As a result, the Air Force and the Navy have systems that preserve and extend institutional knowledge.

Alternatives

Alternative One: Status Quo

To keep FMS fully staffed, the current efforts are utilizing part-time employees since the Department of State has a limited number of full-time employees allotted to each office, and full-time employees are paid by the Department of State, not the FMS office budget. To increase the size of the office and delegate more task, FMS is utilizing help from part-time employees. When a full-time leaves or retires, leadership will promote a part-time employee to a full-time position. There are two part-time employees, but FMS is looking to double the number of part-time employees to ensure adequate staffing.

Figure 3: Timeline of Status Quo

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Two PT	Increase part-time employees' number to four	Maintaining four part-time employees		

Alternative Two: Succession Planning

Succession planning is crucial for all three divisions with FMS – CRD, DESD, and FMSD. It involves identifying, developing, and preparing potential successors for key organization positions to ensure the smooth functioning of the office without disruption. Research has shown that implementing succession planning can help an office prepare employees to step into vacant positions (Titzer et al., 2023; Ali & Mehreen, 2019).

To kickstart the succession planning process, FMS leadership will conduct a survey among current employees to determine their interests in cross-training and past experiences, as well as areas they would like to explore. This survey will provide an opt-in system to ensure those who want to learn and possibly advance can. Based on the survey responses, FMS leadership will decide which employees will start the individualized succession planning process (Redman, 2006).

The planning process for the mentees will involve various activities, such as training, shadowing mentors, attending meetings, and taking on small tasks to gain exposure to the new role. To ensure successful implementation of this program, the mentees will be required to attend a training session every three months and shadow at least half of their mentors' weekly meetings. This combination of training and shadowing will provide the mentees with the necessary skills and knowledge to take on small tasks from their mentor. For instance, during the shadowing process, the mentees will be expected to attend meetings and calls with their mentors, take notes, and observe how their mentors interact with contractors. They will also be required to fill in for employees if the need arises. Through this process, the mentees will gain valuable experience and develop their skills, which will prepare them for the transition into their new role.

Figure 4: Timeline for Succession Planning

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Planning and Programming	Implementation			

Alternative 3: Centralization of Knowledge Management

CRD is updating its SharePoint¹ site for the DOS, which serves two purposes. The first purpose is the front-facing side, which is accessible to the entire DOS and provides information and functions of the office. The second purpose is for internal use within the office, acting as a database with knowledge of the CRD. However, the other two divisions within the FMS still need to catch up and utilize the capabilities of the internal database on the SharePoint page.

Implementing knowledge management can result in an office's cost savings, allowing resources to be used more efficiently. To kickstart the knowledge management process, two CRD employees must oversee meetings with leadership from the FMSD and DESD to establish procedures for identifying, assessing, organizing, storing, and utilizing the internal database. These meetings will help the two divisions task out the knowledge process.

The six essential steps in the knowledge management process are to determine what knowledge needs to be captured, capture the knowledge, refine it to make it actionable, store it in SharePoint, establish a permanent task for maintaining the database, and finally convert it to a useful format for the rest of the office and agency (Davis, 2013). By following these steps, FMS can centralize its knowledge and utilize it more efficiently.

Figure 5: Timeline for Centralization of Knowledge Management

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Collecting Knowledge		Storing Knowledge	Distribution of knowledge	Use of knowledge

¹ SharePoint is a Microsoft program that creates website. The website is a secure space to share, store, organize and access information (Microsoft, n.d.)

Criteria

When evaluating the following alternatives, three criteria are considered: Cost, Effectiveness, Administrative Feasibility. All are scored on a 1 to 5 scale. All criteria are equally weighted as requested by FMS.

Cost

To evaluate the cost of each alternative, the criterion will consider the cost of implementing each alternative over a five-year period, as compared to the status quo. The cost criterion will be evaluated on a 1 through 5 scale to ensure that can be compared to the other criteria. A scoring of 5 will indicate a cost reduction of over 20 percent as compared to the status quo. A scoring of 4 will indicated a cost reduction of at least 10 percent, while a scoring of 3 will indicate that the alternative is of the same cost as the status quo. A scoring of 2 will indicate that the alternative increases the cost of the status quo by 10 percent, and a scoring of 1 will indicate that the alternative increases the cost of the status quo by 20 percent. It is important to note that some assumptions will be constant across all alternatives, such as the increase of part-time employees from two to four by 2025.

Cost saving calculation:

$\text{Status Quo} - \text{Alternative} = \text{Difference}$

$\text{Difference} / \text{Status Quo} = \text{Cost saving percentage}$

The calculations will account for inflation until 2028 and then will have a discount rate of 5% at the net present value. The hourly salary wages are from the 2023 General Schedule for the Washington-Baltimore-Arlington area provided by the U.S Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the inflation rates are from the Congressional Budget Office's Economic Outlook Report (OPM, n.d.; Congressional Budget Office, n.d.). Details for the cost calculations are provided in Appendix A.

Effectiveness and Administrative Feasibility

To score the alternatives, a survey was given to a range of stakeholders with expertise in various areas of the office who would be involved in implementing the alternatives. Ten surveys were emailed out, and four stakeholders responded and were interviewed. The stakeholders were chosen based on their positions and qualifications. Stakeholders one and four are Division Heads, providing insight into the office environment and feedback on the feasibility of the alternatives. Stakeholder two is on the budget team, offering information on the cost of each alternative. Stakeholder Three is a departing employee, providing honest feedback on the likelihood of the alternatives being implemented and how current employees might react to the change. The stakeholders score each survey question on a scale of 1 to 5. This was followed by an interview with the stakeholders to discuss the survey results. In addition to the stakeholders' scorings, a review of relevant literature was also conducted. If the survey and interview results align with the trends in the literature, then the experts' input will guide the scoring. However, if there is a conflict between the survey and interview results and the literature, the literature results will be the primary consideration when evaluating the effectiveness of each alternative were determined by calculating the average of all the stakeholders' scorings while also considering the literature. The interview question and scorings for each question can be found in Appendix B.

Administering a Likert survey can improve the evaluation process as it provides a more in-depth insight into the office's perspective. By converting qualitative data into quantitative data, it allows for a systematic evaluation and comparison of each alternative. This approach ensures that the results are more informed and personalized for the client.

Effectiveness

To evaluate effectiveness a set of criteria will be employed. This criterion includes number of tasks completed, boost in employee morale, improve overall productivity and reduction of burnout in the office. Experts and literature will be consulted to determine the effectiveness of each alternative, using a 1 through 5 scale. A scoring of 1 will indicate that an alternative will decrease productivity and increase burnout, while a scoring of 5 will show that an alternative increases productivity and reduces burnout. However, one potential weakness in this criterion is the lack of precise numerical data to measure productivity. To address this, the experts' input will carry more weight in the evaluation process. The experts' input will be 60 percent of the weight while the literature is 40 percent of the total score.

Administrative Feasibility

A set of criteria will evaluate FMS's ability to successfully implement, monitor, and maintain the alternative. This criterion will consider several key factors to understanding CRD's administrative capabilities, including personnel, available technology, the current office environment, and leadership support.

Experts will evaluate each alternative through the survey that was explained above and the literature. Each alternative evaluation is on a 1 through 5 scale. A scoring of 1 signifies a complete absence of office capabilities (administrative, personnel, technology, office environment and leadership), while a score of 2 indicates 25 percent of the office's administrative potential. At score 3, the alternative has access to at least half of the office's administrative capabilities. A score of 4 states that the alternative has 75 percent of the office's capabilities. Finally, score 5 indicates that the alternative has 100 percent of the office's capabilities.

Findings

The following sections provide analysis of each proposed policy alternative based upon the evaluative criteria of cost, administrative feasibility, and effectiveness.

Alternative One: Status Quo

FMS plans to increase the number of their part-time employees from two to four by 2028.

Cost

Score: 3

FMS is currently considering the status quo, which involves increasing the number of part-time employees from 2 in 2024 to 4 from 2025 through 2028. This decision would result in an estimated cost of \$1.2 million, which has been calculated in present value using a discount rate of 5% and accounting for inflation up until 2028 (Congressional Budget Office, n.d.). To arrive at this figure, the assumptions made were the hourly rate for the average part-time employee. Specifically, using GS 8 step 5 as a middle ground of \$30.46 between GS 7 and GS 9 range of part-time employees (OPM, n.d.). The calculation did not consider overtime, focusing solely on a 32-hour workweek, which was then multiplied by 50 weeks to create an average salary. To account for benefits, the annual salary was multiplied by .3 and added to the base amount, resulting in an annual salary with benefits of approximately \$53,000 per part-time employee. To calculate benefits the CRD budget team recommended calculating benefits .3 to the total salary and then adding the estimate to the total salary. This figure was then multiplied by the number of part-time employees each year to arrive at a total cost of around \$1.1 million over the five-year period. Details for the cost calculations are provided in Appendix A Table A1.

Cost saving calculations
 $\$1,120,813 - \$1,120,813 = 0$
 $0 / \$1,120,813 = 0$
0% cost savings

Administrative Feasibility

Expert Average Score: 4.3

To maintain the status quo, the office plans to increase the number of part-time employees over the next five years. Expert opinions support this approach, and there is leadership backing for this decision. The current office environment is conducive to increasing the number of employees, as there is a need to delegate tasks to new staff in the coming years. Additionally, the office's technology capabilities can accommodate the increase in employees. There are sufficient personnel available to onboard and assign these employees to different divisions. However, there are concerns regarding the long-term cost of maintain this alternative, which was only expressed by stakeholder two, who had jurisdiction over the budget. The score of 4.3 for this criterion is solely based on the experts' input. In Figure 3 there is a timeline that shows the steps of implementation with all the steps included.

Effectiveness

Expert Average Score: 4.1

Maintaining a fully staffed office is the goal of the status quo, and experts agree that having more people in the office can increase productivity by allowing for more delegation of tasks. Currently, part-time employees are responsible for low-level tasks, such as organizing office materials and managing in-person contractors, particularly those who handle maintenance requests. This has allowed full-time staff to focus on larger projects instead of customer service. As a result, the office has experienced success and plans to continue increasing the number of part-time employees by 2025. While full-time staff feel less overloaded with tasks, there may be issues in the future when retirements or separations occur since part-time employees lack training in managing larger projects and participating in meetings, creating a knowledge gap between the two groups. As such, this solution may not have long term success if there are significant changes in staffing. As there is no literature on the effectiveness of the status quo alternative, the experts were solely relied upon to score the alternative, with each question given equal weight in the scoring process. The score of 4.1 for this criterion is solely based on the experts' input. as there is no literature available for consideration. The interview question and scorings for each question can be found in Appendix B.

Alternative Two: Succession Planning

Implementing succession planning throughout the entire FMS office will involve a two-step process. The first step, which will take place in the first year, will focus on planning and programming for upcoming retirements and an increase in part-time employees. Succession planning aims to move individuals within the office to backfill the positions that will be vacant. By 2025, the client plans to have up to four part-time employees.

The alternative proposes that a survey will be conducted through planning and programming to identify individuals suitable for the mentee/mentor program. In the second step, these individuals will be provided shadowing and training opportunities to transition into the new roles eventually. The primary goal of this alternative is to reduce the learning curve by providing full-time and part-time employees with more exposure to positions they could hold in the future.

Cost

Score: 4.8

The total cost of implementation and cost saving was calculated through two steps. Firstly, the cost of implementation was determined by considering the average hourly wage of leadership in the 2023 General Schedule pay scale (OPM, n.d.). Multiplying average weekly hours that leadership would take to implement the alternative by 50 weeks, accounting for inflation and using a discount rate of 5% (Congressional Budget Report, n.d.). This amounted to an implementation cost of approximately \$115 thousand.

Secondly, the assumption that were made were the potential cost savings were calculated by creating a plan to move one and eventually two part-time employees full-time, reducing the cost of part-time employees on the overall office budget. The cost savings were calculated by multiplying the 32-hour weeks that the part-time employees would no longer work by 50 to account for the year, without accounting for overtime. The cost savings would start in 2025 and continue until 2028, resulting in a total cost saving of about \$328 thousand. Details for the cost calculations are provided in Appendix A Table A2.

By implementing this alternative, the office would only spend \$973 thousand over the five-year period.

Cost saving calculation:

$$\$1,120,813 - \$907,981 = \$212,832$$

$$\$212,832 / \$1,120,813 = .189$$

18.9% cost savings

Administrative Feasibility

Expert Average Score: 3.8

There were mixed responses from the experts regarding the implementation of succession planning. Some experts believe that the current environment within the office is conducive to implementing a succession plan due to positive office environment. However, other experts have raised concerns about the current environment within the office as being closed-off to open communication due to fears of feeling dispensable. Despite this, the office has enough personnel with the expertise to plan and program this alternative, so there is no need to hire additional staff. Additionally, the office has the technological capabilities to enact this alternative. The score of 3.8 for this criterion is solely based on the experts' input. In Figure 4 there is a timeline that shows the steps of implementation with all the steps included.

Effectiveness

Total Average Score: 4.6

Within the Evidence of Potential Solutions section, it provides information about how Succession Planning is effective way to place high potential employees into their next role (Oddou & Mendenhall, 1990; Robinson, 2017; Yawson, 2019). The development process invests in the best and those who have the highest potential (Barnett & Davis, 2008; Titzer et al., 2013). This alternative will be effective due to its process and structure to identify full and part time employees for future positions within the office. While also enforcing a continuation of training and developing to the employees to ensure their success in the new role. Although the literature is limited due to the lack of quantitative evidence and the qualitative data are case studies done on non-government agencies, like nursing units. To help combat this limitation, experts have pointed out that succession planning would improve productivity through the continuous flow of ideas and expertise, facilitated by a clear hierarchical system. Therefore, the insights from the interview and survey results of experts are an important measure to consider. *The score of 4.6 is determined by a combination of input from the experts score of 4.75 and the literature score of 4.5, with 40% of the weight given to the experts and 60% to the literature.* The interview question and scorings for each question can be found in Appendix B.

Alternative III: Centralization of Knowledge Management

The FMS office has three divisions that collectively hold significant knowledge. The office can use a SharePoint site as an internal database to manage and centralize this knowledge. By implementing a knowledge management process, the office can streamline its operations and save costs by efficiently utilizing resources.

The six essential steps for successful knowledge management are: identifying the knowledge that needs to be captured, capturing it, refining it to make it actionable, storing it in SharePoint, establishing a permanent task for maintaining the database, and converting it to a helpful format for the rest of the office and agency (Davis, 2013). By following these steps, the FMS office can centralize its knowledge and make it more accessible and valuable for all its employees.

Cost

Score: 3.9

The total cost of implementation and cost saving was calculated through two steps. Firstly, the cost of implementation was determined by considering the average hourly wage of leadership in the 2023 General Schedule pay scale. Multiplying average weekly hours that leadership would take to implement the alternative by 50 weeks, accounting for inflation and using a discount rate of 5%. This amounted to an implementation cost of approximately \$165 thousand. Secondly, the assumptions that were made were the potential cost

Secondly, the assumption that were made were the potential cost savings were calculated by creating a plan to move one and eventually two part-time employees full-time, reducing the cost of part-time employees on the overall office budget. The cost savings were calculated by multiplying the 32-hour weeks that the part-time employees would no longer work by 50 to account for the year, without accounting for overtime. The cost savings would start in 2026 and continue until 2028, resulting in a total cost saving of about \$275 thousand. Details for the cost calculations are provided in Appendix A in Table A3.

By implementing this alternative, the office would only spend approximately \$1 million over the five-year period.

Cost saving calculation:

$$\$1,120,813 - \$1,010,804 = \$110,009$$

$$\$110,009 / \$1,120,813 = .098$$

9.8% cost saving

Administrative Feasibility

Expert Average Score: 2.2

The experts agree that additional staff or personnel are necessary to plan and execute the initial startup of the knowledge management process. While no direct quotes from the interviews can be provided due to confidentiality reasons, it was noted that the main concerns revolved around employees with unequal technical understandings and a general lack of interest. Furthermore, there is a lack of leadership support, and the current office environment is not conducive to changes in the knowledge management process. According to the literature, open communication is a critical component for efficient data use in the future, but unfortunately, the office lacks this attribute (Benbya & Belbaly 2005; Girard & McIntyre, 2010). Moreover, there is a shortage of personnel with knowledge management backgrounds, regarding additional training and possibly an increase in staff with knowledge management expertise. While the office has the technological capabilities to implementing this alternative, the lack of interest from personnel and leadership, coupled with the lack of communication across different offices, means that this alternative has low administrative feasibility for the office. *The score of 2.2 for this criterion is solely based on the experts' input.* In Figure 5 there is a timeline that shows the steps of implementation with all the steps included.

Effectiveness

Total Average Score: 4.1

The literature has established a consensus that knowledge management is effective in increasing productivity (Gavrikova, 2016; Kianto et al., 2018). To achieve successful knowledge management within an office, four factors need to be strong. The FMS has the technological capabilities and leadership support, but currently lacks the culture and ability to complete the process of implementing knowledge management (Girard & McIntyre, 2010). On the other hand, some successful government agencies have implemented different forms of knowledge management such as repositories (Asoh, Belardo & Neilson, 2002). However, these agencies have a clear hierarchical system and culture of open communication (Asoh, Belardo, & Neilson, 2002; Bennett & Porter, 2003). Despite the potential benefits of knowledge management, such as readily available information leading to less time spent searching for information and decreased burnout within the office, experts acknowledge the limitations of the FMS in implementing a successful knowledge management system, as mentioned earlier (Kianto et al., 2018). *The score of 4.1 is determined by a combination of input from the experts score of 4.87 and the literature score of 3, with 40% of the weight given to the experts and 60% to the literature.* The interview question and scorings for each question can be found in Appendix B.

Outcome Matrix

Alternatives	Criteria			
	Effectiveness	Feasibility	Cost	Avg
Status Quo	4.1	4.3	3	3.8
Succession Planning	4.6	3.8	4.8	4.4
Centralization of KM	4.1	2.2	3.9	3.4

Recommendation

Upon evaluation the available alternatives using the established criteria, it has been determined that Succession Planning is the most favorable solution. Succession planning cost-saving gives an edge over maintaining the status quo. Moreover, its administrative feasibility makes it more achievable compared to the Centralization of Knowledge Management. Hence, it is recommended to implement Succession Planning as the best course of action. With this approach, the organization can ensure a smooth transition of employees, minimize potential risks, and maintain a competitive advantage.

Implementation

Planning and Programming in 2024

To begin the Planning and Programming process for 2024, the director of FMS, along with the three division heads and human resources, will hold a series of meetings. During these meetings, the division heads will assess the importance of their respective positions and score them based on productivity loss in the event of a long-term vacancy. Once the crucial positions are identified, the current full-time employees in those positions will be evaluated for projected retirements within the next five years, making them eligible for possible successors. HR will schedule meetings with the eligible full-time employees and their division heads to develop a retirement plan.

Additionally, CRD will conduct a survey to assess the interest of full-time and part-time employees in joining a succession plan. The survey will approve by the director of FMS and division heads and will include the essential jobs and their requirements. After collecting the data, HR will draft individualized plans for those who qualify for the succession planning program (Redman, 2006). The full-time and part-time employees that are eligible for the program will have the same grade or one grade lower than the position they will potentially full and must possess the required technical skills or be willing to attend trainings to obtain.

Once all positions are matched with an employee, CRD will send individualized plans to qualified employees and their division heads. An updated organization chart will also be shared with everyone in the office to inform them about the chain of command. This alternative approach to planning and programming will ensure the smooth transfer of knowledge and skills while reducing hiring time. By providing job growth opportunities, the program will also boost productivity and morale within the office. Reevaluation will be an ongoing process to adapt to changing circumstances, and HR will assess retirement data to expand the succession planning program accordingly.

Possible Limitations in Planning and Programming

The Planning and Programming process may face limitations that need to be considered. One such limitation is the availability of qualified employees to fill critical roles if they become vacant. Some employees may not be interested, or they may not possess the necessary qualifications. In addition, the civil service track requires that an employee applying for a position needs to be at the same GS level or a level below. Therefore, if there are not enough eligible employees for the transition within the office within the next five years, HR will need to plan for future vacancies. However, HR will have sufficient time to search within the department before posting to USAjobs.

Another potential limitation is the impact of political considerations. With the presidential election in 2024, a change in leadership within Department of State could affect the entire department by

2025. Furthermore, a budget cut could lead to a hiring freeze or unnecessary stress on offices as they plan out their fiscal year. If the department faces budget cuts or realignment, the competition for the allocation of funds and number of full-time employees could change based on the political agenda of the political appointees in higher leadership. Therefore, the Planning and Programming process needs to take these limitations into account to mitigate any potential issues that may arise. By doing so, the program can be adjusted to adapt to changing circumstances and ensure the smooth transfer of knowledge and skills within the department.

Operation of Succession Planning from 2025 through 2028

Shadowing and Training

To prepare for their future roles, mentees will have the opportunity to shadow their mentors in weekly meetings and calls. By observing how their mentors handle contractors and projects, they can gain valuable insight into the job requirements and responsibilities. This process also fosters open communication and knowledge sharing among team members. Mentees are expected to attend at least 50 percent of their mentors' meetings each week.

Throughout the shadowing period, mentees will also undergo formal training to acquire more technical skills every three months. This training will continue even after the employees has transitioned into their position. However, since training takes a week away from the employee's regular duties, they may need to plan accordingly and allot time after the transition to complete their training.

Transition

When the mentor is a year away from retirement, they will begin to transition their projects to the mentee. This process allows the mentee to gradually assume more responsibilities and gain experience in managing projects. Meanwhile, the mentee will delegate some of their projects to the person below them in the office who will be filling their position. This ensures a smooth transition of information and projects throughout the offices' chain of command.

Possible Limitations in Operation

To ensure the smooth operation of the Succession Plan, it is crucial to consider the potential limitations that may occur. One of these limitations is the possibility of qualified employees leaving early for various reasons such as better opportunities in another office or family plans. If an employee in line for a position were to leave, it would require reevaluation of the plan. HR would need to contact the next eligible employee for the plan and rework the planning with their division head. It's important to have a contingency plan in place to avoid any disruptions to the implementation of the succession plan.

Conclusion

After evaluating different options, it has become clear that Succession Planning is the best way to reduce turnover within the FMS office. This action plan has been identified as the most effective turnover management method. However, it is essential to note that Succession Planning and Knowledge Management help store and apply institutional knowledge. In the future, FMS should consider implementing Knowledge Management into their organizational structure to document institutional knowledge better. In addition, FMS needs to hire individuals with knowledge of Knowledge Management and train current employees to document their tasks more clearly and frequently for future employees. However, Succession Planning is the most feasible solution for FMS to address the current turnover issues.

Appendix A: Cost Matrix

The inflation rates used below were obtained from the Congressional Budget Office report titled Budget and Economic Outlook: 2023 to 2033. The 2023 General Schedule Report for Washington, Baltimore, and Arlington, created by the United States Office of Personnel Management, is used to obtain hourly wages. It is important to note that Table A2 and Table A3 calculate the part-time employee's salaries based on the salaries listed in Table A1.

Table A1: Status Quo Average Projected Cost from 2023 through 2028					
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
# of Part-Time	2	4	4	4	4
Average Part-Time hourly rate	\$ 30.46				
Inflation Rate	4.8	3	2.2	2.1	2.1
Wage with Inflation	\$ 31.92	\$ 32.88	\$ 33.60	\$ 34.31	\$ 35.03
Total Weekly Wage Cost	\$ 2,043	\$ 4,209	\$ 4,301	\$ 4,392	\$ 4,484
Annual Wage Cost (Not Discounted)	\$ 102,151	\$ 210,430	\$ 215,060	\$ 219,576	\$ 224,187
Annual Wage Cost (Discounted)	\$ 97,286	\$ 190,867	\$ 185,777	\$ 180,646	\$ 175,657
Annual Salary with benefits	\$ 131,337	\$ 257,670	\$ 250,799	\$ 243,872	\$ 237,136
Total Cost	\$ 1,120,813				

Table A2: Succession Planning Average Projected Cost from 2023 through 2028					
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Supervisor Hours per wk.	10	10	5	5	5
Supervisor Hourly wage	\$ 68.55				
Inflation % Rate	4.8	3	2.2	2.1	2.1
Wage with Inflation Rate	\$ 71.84	\$ 74.00	\$ 75.62	\$ 77.21	\$ 78.83
Annual Wage Cost (Not Discounted)	\$ 35,920	\$ 36,998	\$ 18,906	\$ 19,303	\$ 19,708
Annual Wage Cost (Discounted)	\$ 34,210	\$ 33,558	\$ 16,332	\$ 15,881	\$ 15,442
Total Cost for Implementation	\$ 115,422				
Hours Saved per wk.	\$ -	\$ 32	\$ 32	\$ 64	\$ 64
Hours Saved per yr.	\$ -	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200
Monetary Value of Saved Time	\$ -	\$ 52,608	\$ 53,765	\$ 109,788	\$ 112,094
Total Savings from Implementation	\$ 328,254				
Total Cost for Alternative	\$ 907,981				

Table A3: Knowledge Management Average Projected Cost from 2023 through 2028					
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Supervisor Hours per wk.	15	15	10	5	5
Supervisor Hourly wage	\$ 68.55				
Inflation Rate	4.8	3	2.2	2.1	2.1
Wage with Inflation Rate	\$ 71.84	\$ 74.00	\$ 75.62	\$ 77.21	\$ 78.83
Annual Wage Cost (Not Discounted)	\$ 53,880	\$ 55,497	\$ 37,812	\$ 19,303	\$ 19,708
Annual Wage Cost (Discounted)	\$ 51,315	\$ 50,337	\$ 32,663	\$ 15,881	\$ 15,442
Total Cost for Implementation	\$ 165,637				
Hours Saved per wk	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32	\$ 64	\$ 64
Hours Saved per yr.	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,600	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200
Monetary Value of Saved Time	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53,765	\$ 109,788	\$ 112,094
Total Savings from Implementation	\$ 275,647				
Total Cost for Alternative	\$ 1,010,804				

Appendix B: Linkert Survey and Stakeholder Data

Stakeholder One: CRD Division Head

Stakeholder Two: Budget

Stakeholder Three: Exiting HR FTE

Stakeholder Four: Technical Branch Division Head

Linkert Survey

Alternative One: Status Quo

Having part time employees then eventually promoting them to FTE.

Alternative 2: Succession Planning

Steps to implement this alternative include: The informal succession planning will include training, shadowing by attending meetings with the mentor, and taking on small tasks to get exposure to the new role. During the meetings and calls, the possible successor should take note of the tentative questions to ask the contractors in the future and be able to fill in for an employee if need be.

Alternative 3: Centralization of Knowledge Management

Steps to implement this alternative include:

1. Two CRD employees tasked with starting the process.
2. These two employees will oversee meetings with leadership from FMSD and DESD to establish procedures for identifying, assessing, organizing, storing, and utilizing the internal database.
3. These meetings should assist these two divisions with tasking out the knowledge process.
 - a. Six steps: These employees need to meet and decide what knowledge needs to be captured, capture the decided knowledge, refine the information to make it actionable, store the knowledge in SharePoint, make a permanent task for employees to maintain the database, and finally be able to convert it to a useful format or the remainder of the office and agency

Administrative Feasibility

Likert Scale Questions on a scale of 1 through 5.

1. How feasible would this alternative be for the current personnel on staff?
2. How feasible would this alternative be with the current technological capabilities within the office?
3. How feasible is this alternative given what you know about your division?

Effectiveness

Likert Scale Questions on a scale of 1 through 5.

1. How effective would this alternative be at increase productivity?
2. How effective would this alternative decrease burnout?

Free Response Questions

Cost

1. When looking at the cost of each alternative should I be considering the time it would take for leadership and other high-level staff to implement the policy?
2. How many hours a week would it take to implement this alternative each week?
3. Are there extra costs with implementing this alternative that have not been thought out? If the answer is yes, please sharing the additional costs that should be included when discussing the alternative?

Other

4. Are there any steps that I am missing in any of the alternatives that I have listed above?

Table B1: Data from Linkert Survey							
Alternative One: Status Quo							
Effectiveness	SH One	SH Two	SH Three	SH Four		Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	5	3	4	4		4.00	4.1
Q 2	5	4	4	4		4.25	
Feasibility						Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	4	4	4	4		4.00	4.3
Q 2	4	3	4	5		4.00	
Q 3	5	4	5	5		4.75	
Alternative Two: Succession Planning							
Effectiveness	SH One	SH Two	SH Three	SH Four	Literature	Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	5	5	4	5	4	4.43	4.6
Q 2	5	5	4	5	5	4.86	
Weight	20%	20%	20%	20%	60%		
Feasibility						Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	3.5	3	3	4		3.38	3.8
Q 2	4	4	4	4		4.00	
Q 3	5	5	3	3.5		4.13	
Alternative Three: Centralization of KM							
Effectiveness	SH One	SH Two	SH Three	SH Four	Literature	Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	5	5	5	5	3	4.14	4.1
Q 2	5	5	4	5	3	4.00	
Weight	20%	20%	20%	20%	60%		
Feasibility						Avg	Total Avg
Q 1	3	1	1	2		1.75	2.2
Q 2	5	3	2	2		3.00	
Q 3	2	1	2	2		1.75	

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