

2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
REPORT ON
HUMAN RESOURCES
April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009

Introduction

The preparation and reporting in Human Resources for the 2008-2009 fiscal year has been enhanced to better evidence our ASPIRE compliance with the CARF standards for business function improvement specific to Human Resources and the utilization of data to set and measure performance indicators. Evidence and documentation of information upon which this report is based include the following:

Gateway's CARF Accreditation Survey published in July 2008; Gateway Society's Strategic Plan and its Fiscal Year Goals – specifically goal 3; most recent annual staff survey conducted in February 2009. This most recent survey was compared against previous staff survey results conducted in February 2005 Employment Equity; February 2006 (Joint Staff and Employment Equity Survey), February 2007 (Joint Survey); February 2008 (Joint Survey). In September, 2008, additional data on retention and turnover rates was obtained and documented in Community Social Services Employers' Association 2008 Mid-Year Turnover Survey in the Community Social Services Sector. Additionally, exit surveys from employees continue to provide an excellent source of information on all matters and standards related to Human Resources.

Program Description

The Human Resources Manager developed the function and role of the Department in multiple stages between 2003 and 2005. The evolution of this department was finalized in March 2005. In November 2005, with the resignation of the Payroll and Personnel Administrator and FOIPP/Privacy Coordinator, the Human Resources Department underwent a final restructuring. This final restructuring phase has resulted in the successful achievement of a distinct Human Resources Department separated out from Payroll and Accounting. The 2006 year was one of consolidation and the department is fully operational, efficient and effective.

The Human Resources Manager is a Board approved senior management and leadership position. The key function of this position initially was to establish quality assurance in the hiring process across the agency, both unionized and non-unionized. The current role is to maintain that quality of hiring and promoting within the agency. The creation of the role of Human Resources Manager now achieves the un-flattened organizational structure desired by the Board and suggested during the May 2005 Accreditation survey process.

Discussion of Outcome Indicators

The joint Staff/Employment Equity survey was distributed in February 2006, February 2007 and then again in February 2008. The labour climate in the province for the last four years has been a challenging one. The negotiated four-year Collective Agreement and the commitment of MCFD/CLBC to fund the actual costs of this new Collective Agreement were all positive factors, which were promised to stabilize the staffing and retention trends in the social services sector.

The low starting wages in the social services sector, the lack of pension, and the volatility of change and transformation negatively effecting the attraction of working in the sector has negatively affected our social services sector Province-wide. Specific to Gateway, the data

collection showed a 13% turnover rate in the casual unionized staff and a 6% turnover rate in the permanent unionized staff for the period March 1, 2008 to March 1, 2009. CSSEA's Recruitment and Retention Survey Report in the Community Social Services Sector, reports the sector turnover rate of 41.2% in the casual unionized staff and 14.8% in the permanent unionized staff.

As well approximately 15 positions in the agency had been vacant for longer than three months. The result of this was that Gateway had to rely on its permanent staff through overtime and casual staff to provide service to clients. As well, Gateway management and exempt staff have been more involved in the direct service to our clients in programs, which has allowed for an increased level of coaching, mentoring, supervision, evaluation and monitoring.

Exit surveys from resigning employees expressed their regret at leaving Gateway stating that better wages and benefits in the education and health sector were the primary reasons for leaving. Gateway training and experience is a preferred requirement for many employers in the education sector hiring Special Education Assistants. As such 100% of the staff resignations from Gateway was deemed to be non-preventable.

The longstanding dedicated unionized, exempt and management staff at Gateway is clearly a strength of the organization that results in the continuation of a person centered best practices service delivery to our clients and their families.

Consistent with the 2008 C.A.R.F. accreditation report it is stated that:

"Gateway is fortunate to employ loyal, highly skilled, and passionately committed management and staff members, many of whom have attained notable longevity of service with the organization. Staff members appear to work with a team ethic at all times among themselves and with the executive director. They are positively motivated and supported, and their work is respected. Comments made by various stakeholders regarding staff focus on the high level of trust with which families regard staff include, "families are supported to become involved at whatever level they feel comfortable," "families are kept in the loop at all times," and "their opinions are frequently solicited and valued by staff." Other comments include, "the levels of staff cooperation and sophistication are outstanding," "staff are keen on learning new techniques and always open to input from others," "staff always operate as a team," "staff are highly professional and competent and work efficiently," and "staff continually go above and beyond to assist parents to navigate the service system."

Achievement of Goals Articulated for the Human Resources Department: Strategic Plan Goal 3: Exploration with CSSEA and CLBC of ways to address the recruitment and retention issues challenging Gateway Society (as part of the social service sector).

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the Human Resources Department was successful in achieving all the action steps and goals established for itself. In summary they included:

Goal One: Maintain positive labour climate.

Achievement was made through:

- Continuation of the respectful, problem solving approach, conflict resolution processes and conflict of interest declarations. 96% of employees in the February 2009 survey

indicated they are given opportunities to express opinions about matters that concern them. This is up from 82% previously reported.

- Continuation of our integrated staff survey which measures employment equity goals and establishes timelines for the review and measurement of employment equity plans and initiatives. 85% of employees indicated that Gateway has supportive policies for those who have children, family responsibilities and/or other personal situations.
- Continuation of our employee recognition plan through, but not limited to; staff of the month, program celebrations, length of service gifts, annual staff party.

Goal Two: Transparency in hiring and postings process.

Achievement was made through:

- Zero grievances or complaints formally or informally received from employees about the hiring and posting process.
- Notifications to the Union occurring on time and in accordance with procedures.

Goal Three: Improve employee understanding of cultural diversity.

Achievement was made through:

- Gateway continues to educate all new employees in cultural diversity as a competency based component in the new employee training.
- 81% of survey respondents agreed that Gateway is a supportive work environment.
- Consistent with the 2008 C.A.R.F. report it is stated that, "*Gateway is commended for the strides it has made to be respectful and supportive of the cultural backgrounds and practices of all of the persons served, family, and staff. This includes the translation and availability of fact sheets about the organization in a number of languages and the review of the cultural diversity policy at the time of new staff orientation as well as annually within each of its programs.*"

Goal Four: Continue to focus on further reducing turnover.

Achievement was made through:

- Monitoring staff retention and loss trends by exploring overall organizational strategies to reduce training costs.
- Expanding marketing and recruitment efforts through new additional online advertisements, Gateway website advertisements, linkages with post-secondary institutions and continuous monthly recruitment.
- During the 2008-2009 fiscal year a gratuitous confidential and without prejudice starting wage of \$17.50 instead of \$15.54 (in the Collective Agreement) was offered for employees who elected to take a position in any of Gateway's programs.

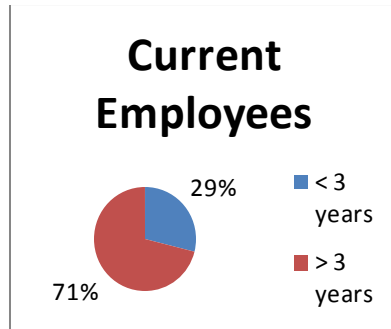
- Enhanced staff training – in response to feedback received from employees and the CARF surveyors, Gateway developed and implemented new training programs within this fiscal year. These include; Medication Administration, Occupational Health and Safety, and an Autism Training Refresher. This is in addition to the existing training programs of Autism Training, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, First Aid/CPR, WHMIS, and FoodSafe.
- Gateway's 2008 - 3 year Accrediation Survey status was extremely positive with approximately 6 recommendations.

As stated in Gateway's 2008 C.A.R.F. accreditation report,

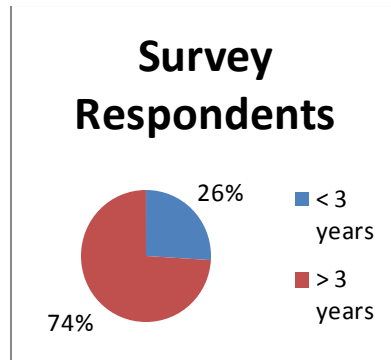
“In the following area Gateway Society – Services for Persons with Autism demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards. Gateway has a long and remarkable track record of going “above and beyond” to make its staff available throughout the province in an on-call capacity to respond to local and distant requests for assistance, some of them urgent, to conduct training and address individual-specific consultative needs. Recently, in response to needs expressed by the families of persons with autism, including those whose sons or daughters are on a waitlist for services, Gateway developed and launched a three-and-a-half day competency-based training program. This was extremely well received by families and caregivers in the province and also by other agencies and external entities. The training consists of two-and-a-half days of autism training and one day of “safe management of disruptive behaviour” training. The latter module is based on the concepts and guidelines of non-violent crisis intervention, but does not include these techniques. Based on the success of this training, the Crisis prevention Institute (CPI) subsequently invited Gateway to collaborate with it in developing its own non-violent crisis intervention caregiver/parent training program for Autism Spectrum Disorders. (ASD). Gateway remained involved with CPI throughout the process of development by means of discussion, sharing resources, and providing feedback. CPI recognized Gateway's tailoring of the non-violent crisis intervention program to the ASD population and, as a result, invited Gateway to review CPI's draft, “ASD Applications of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training” in Toronto. Upon completion of that review, CPI formalized the ASD program and now offers it internationally. Gateway's other non-violent crisis intervention instructors have since attended the new non-violent crisis intervention training program. “

Results of the February 2009 Staff Survey

Within the current compliment of employees, 71% have been employed with Gateway for over three years.



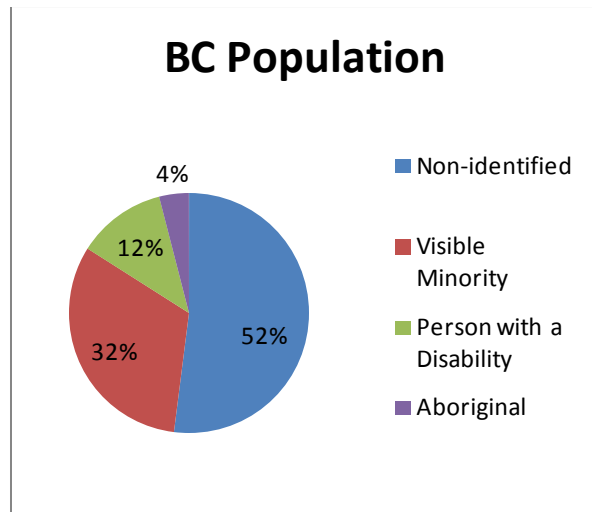
Respondents to the 2009 Staff Survey show 74% as employed with Gateway for over three years.



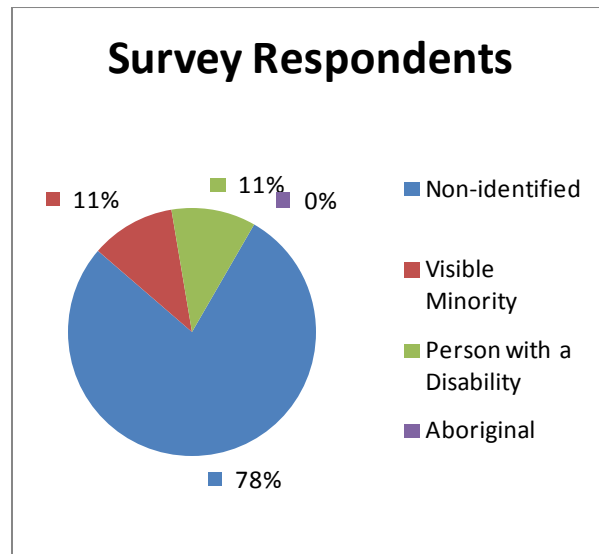
Within the current staff compliment 76% of employee's in positions have been employed with Gateway Society for over three years.

Within the current staff compliment 59% of casual employee's have been employed with Gateway Society for over three years.

The following indicates BC population percentages as it relates to cultural diversity:



The following indicates Gateway's survey respondents population percentages as it relates to cultural diversity:



Conclusion

The 2008-2009 fiscal year has been a highly successful one despite the significant challenges prevalent in our sector and most recently in the worldwide economy. These challenges are predicted to continue through the next two years and beyond. The goals for the fiscal year 2009-2010 will continue to be those articulated in the Society's Strategic Plan and the suggestions and encouragements received from the CARF surveyors related to recruitment and retention issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Armstrong,
Human Resources Manager