



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING (N4A)

AAA WORKFORCE SURVEY

ABBE LACKMEYER, JANE K. STRAKER AND SUZANNE R. KUNKEL

The steady increase in our population age 60 and over has implications for all sectors of the economy and the labor force. Between 2005 and 2030 the number of older adults will almost double. But the shortage of workers to provide services to them will also continue to grow, including the acute health care workforce of physicians, nurses, and others. There will also be an increase in the demands on the complex system of services designed to help people stay healthy and independent in their communities for as long as possible. Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are at the heart of this community-based system. But little was known about the current and future workforce of the aging services network.

With a grant from the Administration on Aging (AoA), the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) partnered with Scripps Gerontology Center to conduct a brief survey to describe the capacity of the current AAA workforce and the workforce capacity building activities undertaken by AAAs. The survey was conducted online and was available for approximately three weeks during January 2010. A total of 363 AAAs responded for a response rate of 57.7%.

The AAA workforce survey had particular relevance this year, in a time of rising unemployment, increased demand on community-based services, and some increased funding for particular sectors of aging services programs. As of November, 2009 the unemployment rates in the counties where respondents to the Workforce Survey were located was 8.9%; the national rate at that time was 9.1%.¹

AAAs are a diverse group of organizations in terms of the services they provide, the individuals they serve, and the people they employ. The Workforce Survey respondents reflect this diversity, but the results also confirm the commitment of the Aging Services Network to maintaining and expanding a qualified work force well-positioned to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the growing older population.

- Respondents have, on average, 40 full-time staff and 20 part-time staff, although half have fewer than 22 full-time and 6 part-time employees.
- Many have large pools of volunteers. The average number of volunteers was 207, although half had 65 or fewer.
- AAA staff bring considerable experience to their organizations. On average, AAAs estimated that over 7 out of 10 of their employees had been with their organization for more than 3 years. Nearly a quarter estimated that at least 90% of their staff had been with the AAA for longer than 3 years.

Key Findings

- Information and Referral Specialists and Case Managers are the most common AAA positions with 84.4% and 73.5% of AAAs, respectively, having these staff positions.
- Licensed social workers and nurses are employed in over half (64.1% and 52.0%) of AAAs.
- Over 95% of AAAs offer retirement plans, health insurance, and paid time off to their full-time employees.
- Over three-fourths of AAAs host interns (76.0%) and joint training programs with other organizations (78.5%).
- Nearly half of AAAs did some restructuring of their organization in the previous year.
- The most common workforce challenge is building capacity for future service needs with current funds. The challenge mentioned by the fewest AAAs (5.6%) is high staff turnover.

¹Workforce survey data were supplemented with data from the 2008 AAA Survey and county unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Staff Positions

Participants were asked to identify which positions they currently have on their AAA staff (either paid or volunteer, but not contractors, and full or part-time). Of the 33 positions listed, AAAs have, on average, 11 positions. It is important to note that many AAAs indicated that there are several situations where one person within their organization holds the responsibilities of more than one job.

The most common positions staffed by a AAA include information/referral specialists, case managers and caregiver program coordinators (see Figure 1). As one may expect, direct service positions (including homemaker, personal care attendant, and home health aide) were less common, with less than 10% of AAAs identifying these as filled positions.

Participants were also asked to identify which positions they will need to add or increase if their organization moves in the direction they envision over the next 5 years. The most common positions AAAs will need to add to or increase over the next 5 years include case managers (41.9%), information and referral specialists (32.4%) and intake assessors (26.5%).

For a complete list of currently staffed positions and positions AAAs envision hiring or increasing over the next 5 years, as well as corresponding percentages, please see Appendix A at the end of this report.

Staff Qualifications

Participants were asked to identify whether they have AAA staff with any of 14 specific qualifications (degrees, certifications, or licenses) currently and whether they will need to add staff with specific credentials within the next 5 years.

The most common qualifications held by current AAA staff members include licensed social workers, registered or licensed practical/vocational nurses, and those with a degree or certificate in business (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Proportion of AAAs Having Staff Members with Specific Qualifications

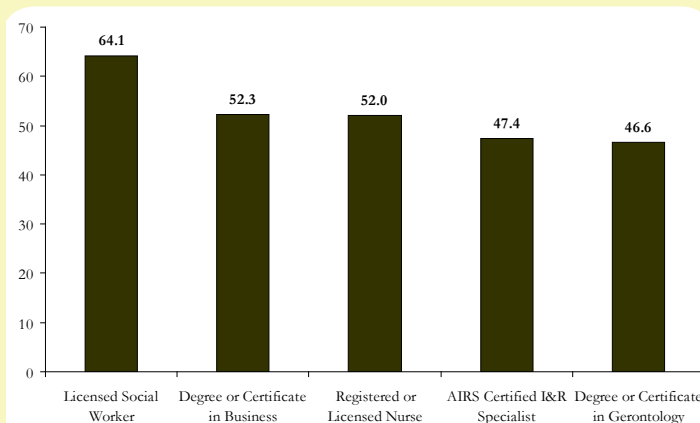
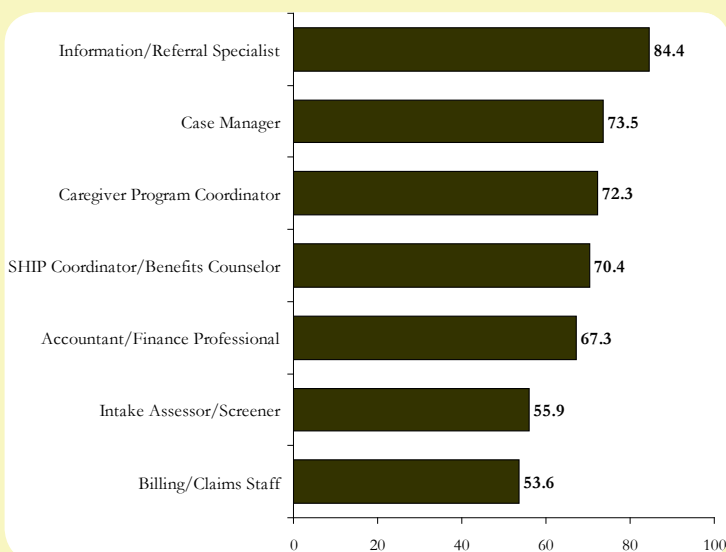


Figure 1. Proportion of AAAs With Specific Positions



Regarding what AAAs envision for the future, the most common qualifications AAAs will need to add or increase in the next five years include AIRS certified information and referral specialists (26.1%), licensed social workers (25.9%), certified geriatric case managers (20.4%) and registered or licensed practical/vocational nurses (18.7%). Appendix B is a complete list of current and future staff qualifications and corresponding percentages.

“We work very hard to be a positive, fully functioning team. We have used various exercises to build and maintain the team.”

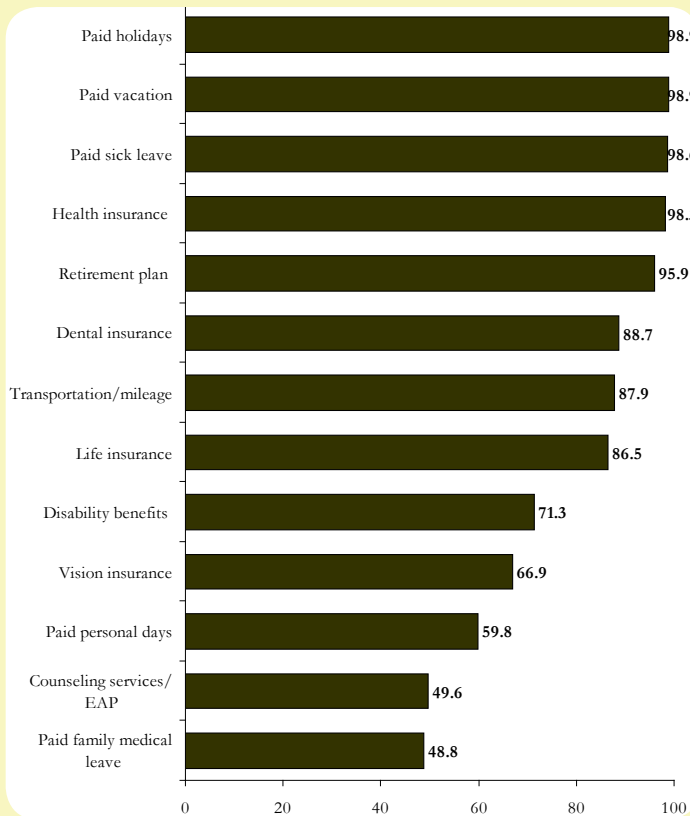
Benefits

AAAs perceived themselves as being competitive with respect to the benefit packages they offer their employees. Participants were asked to rate (on a scale of 1, 'not at all competitive' to 5, 'very competitive') how their AAA compared to organizations in their area that hire similar employees. Regarding benefits packages, the average AAA rating was 4 out of 5. Over a third (37.9%) rated themselves as very competitive.

Participants were asked to identify which benefits (from a list of 19) are offered to their full-time employees. On average, AAAs offered 12 benefits to their full time employees. The most commonly provided benefits include paid vacation, paid holidays, paid sick leave, health insurance and a retirement plan (see Figure 3). The least commonly provided benefits include wellness programming (30%), paid parental leave (25.6%), and domestic partner benefits (21.8%). Please see Appendix C for a complete list of benefits and corresponding percentages.

Of those who offer health insurance to their full time employees, 34.5% of AAAs pay the health insurance premium while 64.2% of AAAs share the cost with the employee.

Figure 3. Proportion of AAAs Offering Specific Benefits

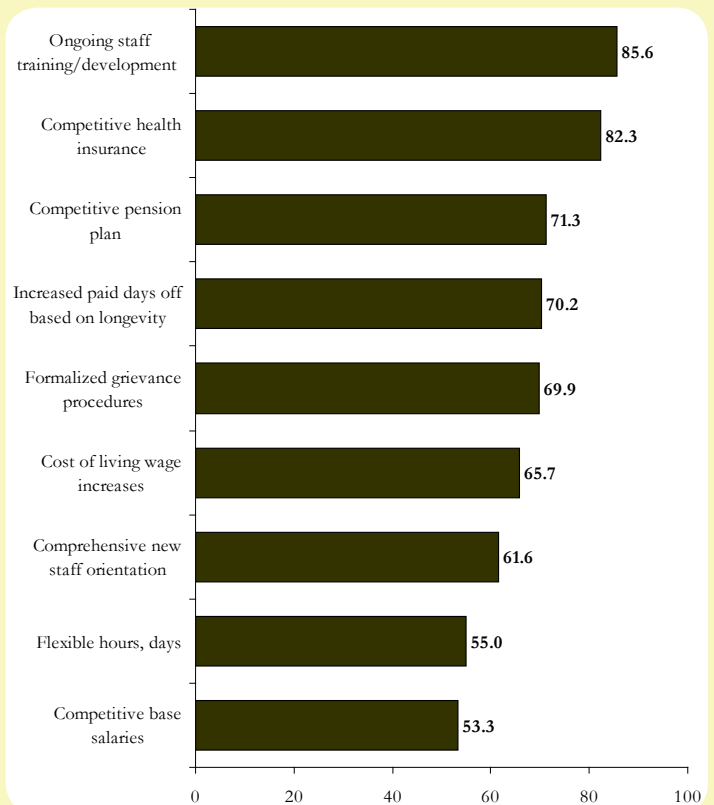


Strategies to Keep Employees

There are a number of strategies AAAs use to maintain a qualified workforce. These range from offering competitive base salaries to allowing for telecommuting and flexible hours and days. When asked to rate their level of competitiveness (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being 'very competitive') regarding staff salaries, respondents gave themselves an average rating of 3.2 out of 5.

Participants were asked to indicate (from a list of 32) which strategies they use to keep employees. On average, AAAs use 11 strategies to keep employees. The most commonly used strategies include ongoing staff training/development, competitive health insurance, a competitive pension plan and increased number of paid days off based on longevity (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Proportion of AAAs Using Specific Strategies to Keep Employees



In addition, a third to a half of respondents used merit/performance-based wage increases, career ladders/promotion opportunities and employee recognition programs to maintain their workforce. Appendix D gives the complete list of strategies and corresponding percentages.

Workforce Capacity Building

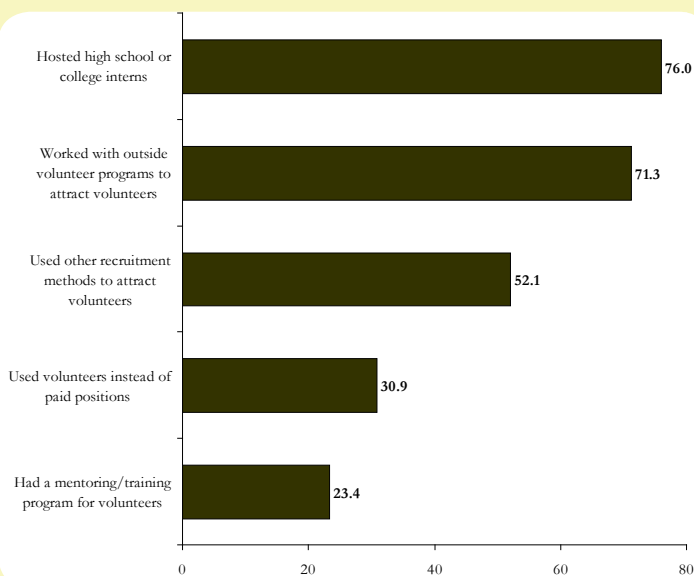
There are a number of activities and strategies AAAs have developed in order to continually build a qualified and effective workforce. These efforts aid in strengthening the capacity of the Aging Network to provide long-term services and supports to their consumers, and to expand their reach. Participants were asked to identify which activities their agency had undertaken in five major categories: involving non-paid workers, training, recruitment and retention, staff qualification, and workforce planning.

Involving Non-Paid Workers

In general, AAAs benefit from state and national employment programs such as the Title V Senior Community Service Employment program. Over 4 out of 10 (41.3%) have at least one Title V participant working in their AAA. Of those who have Title V workers, the average number is 5. In addition, just over 14% of respondents indicated that they have employees who are paid for by Americorps, VISTA or another state or national employment program. Of those who do, the average number of employees who are paid for by an employment program is 6.

In addition to having employees from Title V and other employment programs, AAAs also take part in activities that involve non-paid workers such as hosting interns or using volunteers in place of paid positions (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Proportion of AAAs Participating in Activities That Involve Non-Paid Workers

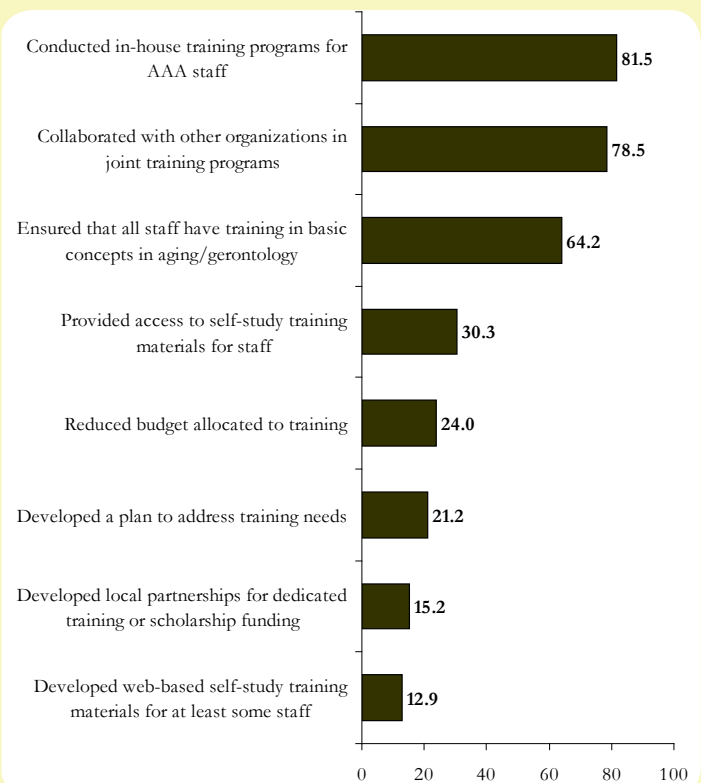


“We are beginning to discuss workforce issues and future training possibilities. We would like to get a small grant to [reach out] in 23 of our rural towns to find seniors who can, through short re-trainings, re-enter the workforce.”

Training

AAAs use a number of strategies to ensure their employees receive adequate training, as shown in Figure 6. Among the 81.5% of agencies who conduct in-house training programs, 80.6% indicate that all of their AAA staff receive this training, while 19.4% indicated that only some AAA staff receiving training. The most common topics include aging (process, health issues, policies), human resources (communication, customer service and harassment), and emergency preparedness/disaster planning.

Figure 6. Proportion of AAAs Involved In Training Activities

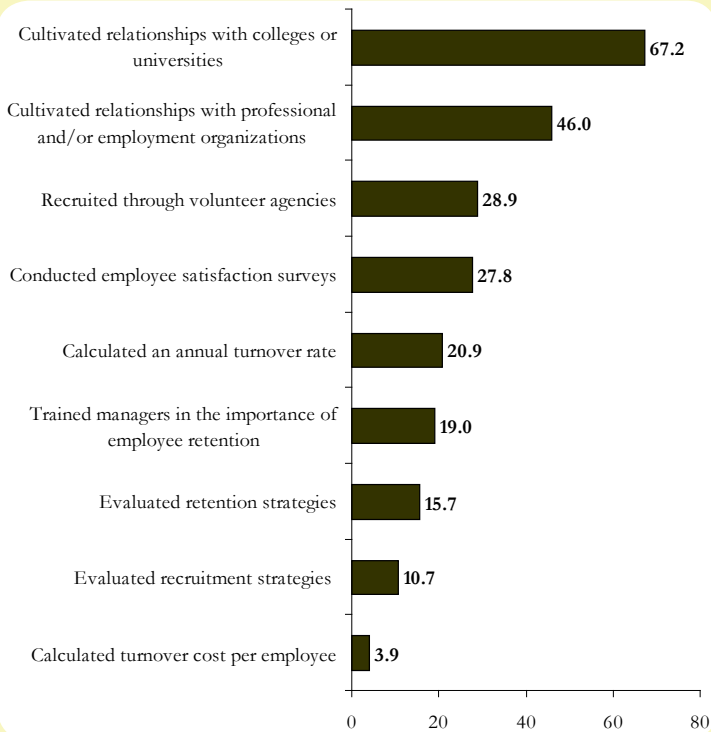


Workforce Capacity Building

Recruitment and Retention

AAAs are involved in a wide range of activities to recruit and retain qualified employees, including cultivating relationships with colleges and employment organizations, and conducting employee satisfaction surveys. Respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being 'very competitive') their competitiveness with respect to their ability to recruit qualified staff. On average, respondents rated themselves 3.5 out of 5. Figure 7 shows the proportion of AAAs involved in recruitment and retention activities.

Figure 7. Proportion of AAAs Involved in Recruitment and Retention Activities

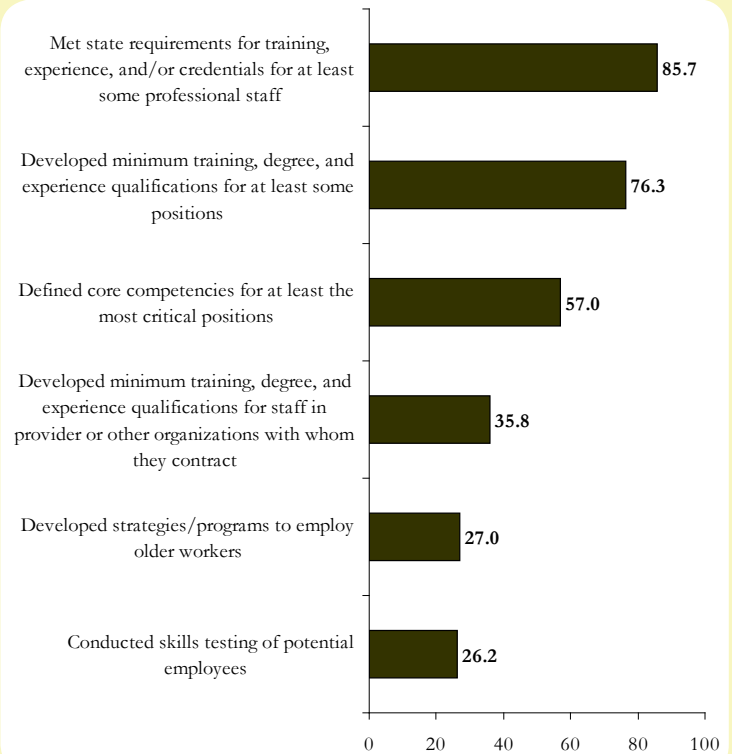


“We are currently undergoing a major strategic plan...that will involve significant changes in how we serve Boomers. It will require major adjustments in staffing.”

Staff Qualifications

AAAs are working on standardizing and formalizing staff qualifications and competencies. Figure 8 shows the proportion of AAAs involved in activities related to ensuring that their staff is qualified and meets position criteria. Over half (57.0%) have defined core competencies for at least some positions and nearly 9 out of 10 (85.7%) have met staff position requirements imposed by their state.

Figure 8. Proportion of AAAs Involved in Staff Qualification Activities

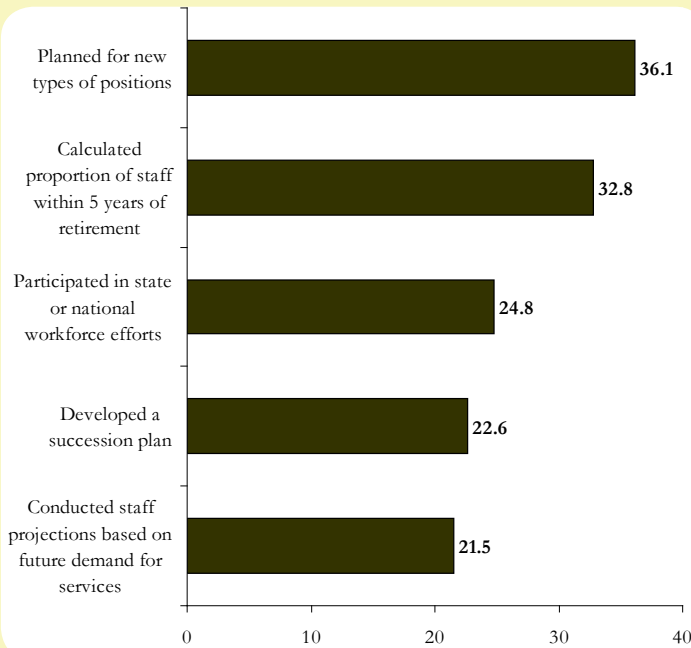


Workforce Planning

AAAs are involved in preparing for tomorrow's workforce needs. As shown in Figure 9, over one-third (36.1%) have made plans for new types of positions and about one-third (32.1%) have also calculated the proportion of staff who are within 5 years of retirement. Among the 32% of AAAs who are tracking staff proximity to retirement, about one in five staff members are within five years of retirement.

Workforce Capacity Building

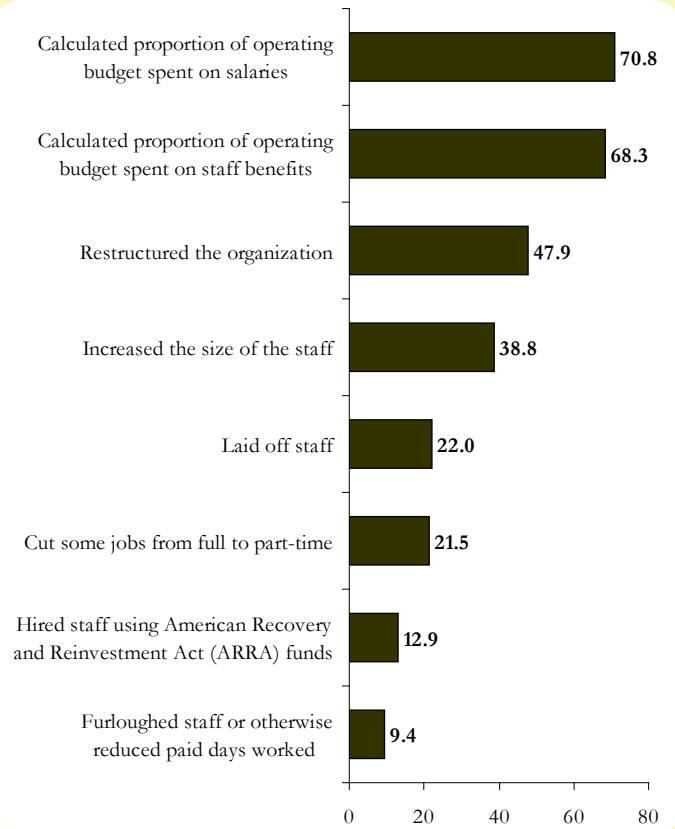
Figure 9. Proportion of AAAs Involved in Workforce Planning Activities



Organizational Change

The current economic downturn has required many businesses to make organizational changes to remain viable. Figure 10 shows the proportion of AAAs that have made recent changes in their organization. Nearly half (47.9%) restructured their organizations. Over two-thirds monitor staff salaries and benefit costs as a proportion of their budget. Of those who have calculated the proportion of their AAA budget spent on salaries, the average proportion is 37%; of those who have calculated the proportion of their budget spent on staff benefits, the average is 15.6%. Of those who used ARRA funds to hire staff, 13.8% also laid off staff during the year; almost one-fifth (17.7%) used ARRA and also increased the size of their staff.

Figure 10. Proportion of AAAs Making Recent Changes in Their Organization



Workforce Challenges

Participants were asked to identify up to 5 (from a list of 13) of the most important workforce issues facing their organization. The most common include:

- 66.8% Building capacity for future service demands with current funds
- 62.0% Maintaining competitive wages
- 55.2% Maintaining appropriate staff workloads
- 43.1% Selecting good staff from applicant pools

Please see Appendix E for a complete list of workforce issues.



For More Information

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396 Upham Hall · Miami University · Oxford, Ohio 45056 · 513.529.2914

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Appendix A

Staff Positions - Current

%	
84.4	Information/Referral Specialist
73.5	Case Manager
72.3	Caregiver Program Coordinator
70.4	SHIP Coordinator/Benefits Counselor
67.3	Accountant/Finance Professional
55.9	Intake Assessor/Screeners
53.6	Billing/Claims staff
45.0	Information Technology Manager/Specialist
39.4	Planner
38.3	Volunteer Manager
38.3	Provider and/or Contractor Relations Manager
36.0	Nutritionists/Dietician
33.8	Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
33.2	Public Relations/Outreach/Marketing Specialist
30.4	Quality Assurance/Improvement Coordinator
30.4	Human Resources Specialist
26.8	Evidence-based Program Coordinator
24.0	Grantwriter
23.5	Caregiver Trainer
23.2	Transportation Coordinator/Mobility Manager
20.7	Wellness Coach/Program Coordinator
18.2	Website/Social Media Specialist
16.5	Clinical Manager/Specialist
16.5	Fund-raising/Development Professional
15.9	Government Relations/Legislative Affairs
15.6	Staff Trainer
14.5	Program Evaluator/Statistician/Research Methodologist
12.0	Other
9.8	Attorney
7.8	Behavioral (Mental) Health Professional
7.8	Homemaker
5.3	Personal Care Attendant/Assistant
3.4	Home Health Aide

Staff Positions - Next 5 years

%	
41.9	Case Manager
32.4	Information/Referral Specialist
26.5	Intake Assessor/Screeners
23.7	Evidence-based Program Coordinator
21.5	SHIP Coordinator/Benefits Counselor
20.4	Fund-raising/Development Professional
19.3	Grantwriter
17.9	Public Relations/Outreach/Marketing Specialist
16.2	Wellness Coach/Program Coordinator
15.1	Quality Assurance/Improvement Coordinator
14.8	Volunteer Manager
14.0	Information Technology Manager/Specialist
13.1	Planner
11.2	Website/Social Media Specialist
11.2	Program Evaluator/Statistician/Research Methodologist
10.3	Behavioral (Mental) Health Professional
10.3	Caregiver Program Coordinator
10.1	Transportation Coordinator/Mobility Manager
9.5	Caregiver Trainer
8.7	Accountant/Finance Professional
8.7	Billing/Claims staff
8.1	Human Resources Specialist
8.1	Nutritionists/Dietician
8.1	Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
7.3	Provider and/or Contractor Relations Manager
7.3	Staff Trainer
5.3	Government Relations/Legislative Affairs staff
5.3	Clinical Manager/Specialist
5.0	Personal Care Attendant
4.2	Homemaker
4.2	Other
3.9	Home Health Aide
1.4	Attorney

Appendix B

Staff Qualifications - Current

%	
64.1	Licensed Social Worker
52.3	Degree or Certificate in Business (any level)
52.0	Registered or Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse
47.4	AIRS Certified Information & Referral Specialist
46.6	Degree or Certificate in Gerontology (any level)
44.8	Personnel with other licenses, degrees, or certification
29.6	Registered Dietician
20.4	Certified Public Accountant
12.6	Certified Geriatric Case Manager
11.5	Certified Human Resources Professional
9.5	Certified Nutrition Specialist
6.3	State-tested or Certified Nursing Assistant
5.7	Certified Health Education Specialist
4.9	Degree or Certificate in Disability/Rehab studies (any level)

Staff Qualifications - Next 5 years

%	
26.1	AIRS Certified Information & Referral Specialist
25.9	Licensed Social Worker
20.4	Certified Geriatric Case Manager
18.7	Registered or Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse
14.9	Degree or Certificate in Gerontology (any level)
10.1	Certified Health Education Specialist
8.9	Registered Dietician
8.9	Degree or Certificate in Disability/Rehab studies (any level)
7.8	Personnel with other licenses, degrees, or certification
7.2	Degree or Certificate in Business (any level)
6.3	Certified Human Resources Professional
6.0	Certified Nutrition Specialist
4.3	State-tested or Certified Nursing Assistant
3.7	Certified Public Accountant

Appendix C

Benefits

%	
98.9	Paid vacation
98.9	Paid holidays
98.6	Paid sick leave
98.3	Health insurance
95.9	Retirement plan (401K, pension)
88.7	Dental insurance
87.9	Transportation/mileage reimbursement
86.5	Life insurance
71.3	Disability benefits (either short or long-term)
66.9	Vision insurance
59.8	Paid personal days
49.6	Counseling services/ Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
48.8	Paid family medical leave
37.7	Paid continuing education units (CEUs)
34.7	College or University tuition reimbursement
30.0	Wellness programming (e.g. fitness memberships)
25.6	Paid parental leave
21.8	Domestic Partner benefits

Appendix D

Strategies to Keep Employees

%		%	
85.6	Ongoing staff training/development	22.4	Monitoring of employee satisfaction through surveys
82.3	Competitive health insurance		
71.3	Competitive pension plan	17.7	Telecommuting
70.2	Increased number of paid days off based on longevity	14.9	Elder care resources
69.9	Formalized grievance procedures	11.3	Family caregiving assistance
65.7	Cost of living wage increases	11.0	Provision of increased resources for doing the work
61.6	Comprehensive new staff orientation	10.2	Employee motivation programs
55.0	Flexible hours, days	9.9	Agency-wide bonuses
53.3	Competitive base salaries	8.8	Promotions based on seniority
45.6	Employee days/events	8.6	Mentor/Buddy programs
42.8	Merit/Performance-based wage increases	4.4	Employee support groups
41.7	Mechanisms for employee input	4.4	Bonus for good attendance
41.4	Longevity wage increases	4.4	Job-sharing/rotation
38.4	Longevity Recognition program	3.3	Hiring bonus after a specific service time
36.7	Career ladders/promotion opportunities	2.5	Other
33.4	Recognition for service/volunteer participation	1.7	On-site child care
32.3	Other kinds of employee recognition and/or awards programs		

Appendix E

Workforce Issues

%	
66.8	Building capacity for future service demands with current funds
62.0	Maintaining competitive wages
55.2	Maintaining appropriate staff workloads/caseloads
43.1	Selecting good staff from applicant pools
39.2	Having adequate resources to meet your current training needs
37.7	Keeping staff appropriately and continually trained
34.1	Recruiting staff with aging and/or disability expertise
28.7	Providing competitive benefits
23.1	Determining workforce needs of the future
19.4	Recruiting staff with required licenses/professional certifications
8.5	Determining future training needs
5.6	High staff turnover
2.0	Other