Recruitment and Selection Challenges in Public Government: Addressing recruitment and selection challenges for Public Employers in the Greater Los Angeles Area

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership

By
Marco Bernocchi

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The graduate project of Marco Bernocchi is approved by:

Dr. Henrik Minassians

Dr. Rhonda Franklin

Dr. Anais Valiquette L’Heureux
Chair

California State University, Northridge
Dedication

This graduate project is dedicated to my wife, Megan, who is my source of inspiration and provides me with constant support and encouragement. You are and will always be there for me, I am truly blessed for having you in my life.

This work is also dedicated to my father. Babbo, I know you are watching all of us from heaven, I hope I am making you proud.
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Abstract

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This study investigates the problems of recruitment and selection in the public sector specifically targeting local governments in the greater Los Angeles area. With the increasing competition amongst employers to attract and retain the best pool of candidates, public sector employers must adapt and cater to the next generation of workers. The issue of recruitment is spread at all level of governments but it is at the local level that organizations are experiencing the most challenges. Through in depth interviews with Human Resources managers and directors, this research investigates the problems that local governments are experiencing and what strategies are they implementing to address workforce planning. Findings show that public administrators must adopt new processes in the recruitment and selection and that the old civil service process must be reviewed in order for organizations to attract the best pool of workers.
INTRODUCTION

After several years of economic turmoil and with many job losses, the American economy has recovered from the recession, putting the United Stated on pace for its best year of growth in well over a decade (Casselman, 2018). The job market is also hitting new records. According to data from April 2018, the unemployment rate dropped below 4% for the first time since 2000, with average hourly earnings increasing 0.1% compared to the prior month and 2.6% from a year earlier (Bloomberg, 2018). Employers grew less than expected in June 2018, likely not just to a slowdown in hiring but mainly from a decline in the labor pool. For the first time, there are more job openings that there are eligible workers to fill them (Cox, 2018). A major problem that businesses are currently facing is finding qualified workers. At the current pace of job growth the problem is set to get much worse. A report released by the Center for Competitive Workforce, a center based at the Los Angeles County Economic Development, suggested that Los Angeles and Orange counties could face a dire shortage of workers unless community college developed mid-level skills to match high-growth industries across the region. Industries across greater Los Angeles will face a 42 percent shortage in workers in fields ranging from health care to computer technology (Bartholomew, 2017). With a population of over 10 million residents, the Los Angeles County is the most populous county in the United States, home to over 244,000 businesses (Los Angeles County, 2017). The county is home of the new and coming Silicon Beach, the area that serves as a central hub in southern California for the tech industry such as Google, Yahoo, YouTube and many others. Several major aerospace and defense technology firms resides in the Los Angeles greater areas such as Northrop Grumman Co., Lockheed Martin Corp. Obviously, Los Angeles is home to major firms in the entertainment business. All these employers are competing for the best pool of candidates. Private companies
can incentivize applicants with pay, fringe benefits, alternative work schedules and also with telecommute opportunities. The public sector must find competitive ways to keep as a competitive employer in the labor market. A first major issue that public employers must address is the recruitment and selection process. Recruitment is the process for which an employer obtains a sufficient number of qualified workers to place in positions to carry on the mission of the organization. The purpose of the recruitment and selection process is to select those individuals that best meet the needs of the organization at that particular time (Nickels et al., 1999). The recruitment process is characterized in part by fulfilling human resources requirements which typically are the results of job analysis (Cascio, 1986), applications, resumes, interviews, reference checks, tests (Snell, 1999). The recruitment of qualified personnel is a priority at all levels of governments and is one of the most challenging tasks that face all public administrators (Basu, 1994). Although, the selection process is identified as one of the most challenging aspects for public employers, processes and requirements have not kept in touch with the labor market and other non-public employers have developed more efficient tools to test and attract potential candidates. Despite placing a high importance and efforts in the recruitment process, public employers seen to have difficulties in attracting the best qualified applicants, particularly at the local level of government. The recruitment problem can be attributed to the fact that public employers must follow the civil service process (Briggs, 2007). The civil service process is characterized by a formal set of rules that dictates every step of the hiring process such as, announcing the position, establishing minimum qualifications, processing applications, appointing the winning candidate, and setting each employee's pay and grade levels (Schick, 1998). Government agencies use the civil service employment process as a way to achieve fair and impartial recruitment processes. However, the experience for job applicants can
be cumbersome, rigid and often subject to delay. Public Administrators need to listen to the feedback provided by candidates and need to change the way in which they recruit for new workforce. While continuing to provide fair and impartial selection process, public administrators ought to find a solution to compete with other employers in order to do not be excluded when competing for the best talent. This is a time when it is critical to deliver the best possible civil service practices and to recruit a diverse range of talent to fill critical positions in public government. The need for public government to recruit and retain talented workers is ever more urgent as many of its most experienced workers prepare for retirement. This research will explore ways that public sector employers can utilize to attract and retain the best workers in this competing labor market. Specifically, the research will focus on the greater Los Angeles area, and will address how public organizations can adapt their recruiting and selection practices. Through qualitative method of research, this study will attempt to find solution to how public sector employers in the greater Los Angeles area can implement tools to attract and retain qualified workforce. This study can enhance the field of public sector Human Resources management since it will analyze the financial, political and systematical challenges in the recruitment and selection field. The study is presented through a literature review which will lay the theoretical foundation at the core of the research.
LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a number of elements that contributes to the success of any organization such as manpower, technology, tool, branding, and money. While these are all important for the success of an organization, the most relevant is human capital. People are the ones that have to coordinate all the resources together in order to make them functional toward the mission and goal of the organization (Chandan 1987). The following section presents literature in regards to the challenges that the public sector is currently facing when dealing with recruitment and selection. In order to guide the reader through the different problematic tied to recruitment and selection in the public sector, articles are divided into sections, an aging workforce, interest in working for the public sector, selection and recruitment in the public sector, a more effective recruitment and selection practice: competency modeling, alternative solutions.

An Aging Workforce

Public sector employers are experiencing a much faster aging workforce than the private sector. A number of circumstances are to blame for this reason. Generally beginning from the 1970’s until mid-1980’s, the public sector experienced an increase in its workforce driven by expansion in public services and by political motivation. Those workers are now retiring. (McKinnon, 2010). The problem of an aging workforce is not just limited to the United States; in fact all western countries are facing similar challenges. In 2007, the Organization for Economic Co-operation development (OECD) argued that “the challenges of attracting and retaining capacity within the public service as large numbers of experienced public servants retire is set to be a growing concern in many OECD countries” (2007b, p. 4). The challenge of aging workforce is not tied to only senior manager roles, but it will impact all levels of the organizations. Clerical
staff for example, represents the vast majority of social security administration employees. This group of workers represents the face of the administration and therefore by losing a high percentage of these employees would required a need for trained staff that could gain the appropriate level of experience (McKinnon, 2010). According to the Social Security Administration, clerical staff in order to be considered experienced, must have at least three years on the job. Therefore, the strategy for recruiting and training new employees must take this factor into account when planning for the new workforce. Analyzing the workforce by age group, the majority of workers tend to be in the age bracket 40-49 years old, with another significant block being between 50-54 years old, making the proportion with young workers in the private sector much smaller (Pilichowski, Arnould and Turkisch, 2008). Several factors are tied to an aging public sector workforce: the recruitment boom that occurred in the 1970s through the 1980s; the age of entry into the public sector seems to have been increased, in fact more than 40% of new recruits in the public sector are 35 years or older. In addition, public sector workers tend to leave the workplace at a younger age than workers in the private sector due to generous pension incentives (Pilichowski, Arnould & Turkisch, 2008). With a relatively high proportion of workers in the public sector retiring or leaving the workforce, delivering the same level of service and the same level of quality to citizens, has become a constant challenge for public administrators. The challenges in maintaining a high level of service is in direct correlation with decreasing staff cost, however this is making it very challenging to keep a sustainable retirement system when new workers are not hire in the system to contribute to current pension receivers (Pilichowski, Arnould & Turkisch, 2008). At all levels of government, the expected workforce reduction is estimated between 40-50 % in the near future, while at the same time, there are not many younger workers able to replace the Baby Boomer workers
(Kiyonaga, 2004). In the past several years, Human Resources professionals have seriously taken this problem into consideration. However, this issue is not just a problem of losing bodies from the workforce, but it is also the loss of institutional knowledge, experience and judgment of those workers that were employed in the public sector for decades. Organizations with a reduction in the workforce may find themselves in a situation where only a handful of individuals hold the knowledge and experience about a particular process or procedure. In this case, the loss of one worker will negatively impact the operations of the entire organization and impact the level of services provided to the public (Kiyonaga, 2004). The entire nation is posed with a workforce crisis but government agencies are most likely to feel this impact on a higher scale because of their proportion of older employees and high demand for knowledgeable workers. The workforce with the required skills and competencies will become harder to recruit especially if governments at all levels do not create a clear expectation for what they are looking for. Public administrations must embrace that change is occurring and must find solutions in order to keep providing those service that define their own existence. The workforce in the public sector is relatively older, in fact, on average, 46.3 percent of government workers are 45 years or older, whereas the workforce in the private sector for the same age bracket, constitutes just 31.2 percent (Jacobson, 2010). The issue with a retiring workforce is not only related to a loss in personnel but also in a loss of knowledge and competencies that were delivered by those public servants. Workers that have served their communities for decades have developed knowledge and understanding of the skills needed to deliver those very own service that define the purpose of government. It becomes critical then that the new generation of workers posses the skills necessary to maintain and to improve the delivery of services to communities. Public servants must have technical knowledge in their relative field of expertise in order to deliver the necessary services, but an
aspect that differentiates them from other sectors is the possession of emotional intelligence. This skill is the understanding of emotions and feelings combined with the rational intelligence or reasoning. This process is the ability to understand the feelings and emotions of their work environment and of the public that they serve. Public servants must recognize the emotions of stakeholders which will then reflect in the level of services that they can provide (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010). A second skill that is at jeopardy of loss with an aging workforce is the ability for public servants to understand and address problems based on politics, responsiveness of stakeholders and policy process making (Rourke, 1992). The new generation of public servants needs to master these skills in order to be receptive for understanding the needs of the public they serve and to deliver those very services.

**Interest in Working for the Public Sector**

For decades, a career in the public sector was viewed by many American workers as a great opportunity and a highly desirable career path; the situation is a bit different today. Currently, only 6 percent of full-time federal workers are under the age of 30, compared to about 24 percent of all employees in the other sector. Similar numbers are recorded within the state and local levels of government (Partnership for Public Service, 2017). The interest and motivation to devolve a career in the public sector has significantly changed and many new job seekers are not looking at public employers as their primary choice of work. Up until the beginning of the 21st century, there was not much scholarly research conducted to understand the motivation and interest of workers starting a career in the public sector. Behn (1995) urged scholars to direct their focus on researching the interest and motivation for working in the public sector. Specifically, he urged scholars to learn how public managers can motivate and attract workers to
pursue a career in the public sector. Wright (2001) determined that work motivation in the public sector can be classified between employees’ motives and job satisfaction. The research founds that while employee motives represent what the employees want or expect from their jobs, job satisfaction is correlated to the employees’ reactions to what they receive. The environment where a worker performs his/her job seems to influence the work motivation, specifically job characteristics and work context. The first describes the aspects of the job or task an employee performs, while the later pertains to characteristics of the organizational setting in which the employee must perform the work (Wright, 2001). Further research seems to highlight the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction in the public sector; however, the relationship between these two factors is not direct but mediated by the extent to which the employee perceives that his or her values are congruent with those of the public sector organization (Wright & Pandey, 2008). The literature has identified differences in workers’ motivation between private and public sector industries. Public employees seem to be less extrinsically motivated by salary than workers in the private sector. Civil servants were also less motivated by self-development but more motivated by additional responsibility compared to the private sector’s workforce. The same data shows that public sector workers were more strongly motivated by the desire to work in a supportive working environment (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007). The motivational differences between the public and private sector may be linked to job content. Data shows that perhaps it is not the particular sector that is the cause for the different motivational experience but rather the different types of jobs available. Most jobs in the public sector are administrative in nature while the majority of jobs in the private sector are geared towards marketing and sales functions. The nature of the job may be the cause of motivational differences between the two employment sectors. Administrative jobs seem to hold
lower motivating potential than commercial jobs, a fact that may be reflected in the aspects of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007).

The organizational mission impacts the level of motivation for workers in the public sector. Previous literature has tested that public workers are attracted in working for an organization whose values and needs are consistent with their own and the mission of the organization aligns with their own set of values (Crewson, 1997; Rainey and Steinbauer, 1999). Wright (2007) analyzed the motivation of public employees through the framework of goal commitment. Goal commitment depicts the extent to which an individual accepts a performance goal and is determined to reach it, even if confronted with setbacks or obstacles (Erez, Earley, and Hulin 1985). Wright (2007) identified that individuals are more committed to their performance objectives when they believe those objectives are achievable and will result in important outcomes for themselves and to the population that they serve. The value that employees see in the mission of the organization they work for was found to be in direct correlation to their work motivation. In fact, the higher the more their values aligned with the mission of the organization, the importance they placed on their own worked increased.

In the United States, more than one-in-three workers (35%) belong to the generation of millennials, making this particular generation the largest group in the country’s labor force (Fry, 2018). However, millennials are not looking at the public sector as a place to work; the outlook for public employers does not seem reassuring if something does not change. Some of the causes that does not make public sector an appealing workplace for many younger workers is antiquate technology (Partnership for Public Service, 2017). Millennials are attracted to a work environment that embraces change and that can provide new stimulus throughout the course of
their career. Over the last few decades, under the pressures of competition, nearly every other industry has had to change how they operate in order to survive but most government agencies however, have not changed in terms of day-to-day operations (Curry, 2017).

Selection and Recruitment in the Public Sector

A civil service job is any position provided by the government to any type of worker. The civil service recruitment process represents the attempt of public entities to establish a system of examination that would allow the exclusion of political influence from the selection of candidates (Griffith, 1974). The first type of law that required a selection process for the appointing and selection of candidates to public posts was the Pendleton Act of 1882. This act required that positions at the federal level should be assigned through an open selection process and assigned on the basis of merit instead of political affiliation. The civil service procedure did not fully expand to local governments until mid 1930s (Tolbert & Zucker, 1982). Currently the process for obtaining a civil service job, consists of apply for a position and if candidates meet the minimum qualifications can subsequently be invited to partake in the examination process. The exam is the first step in the selection process and is specific for the job or classification that is being applied for. Generally, after the completion of the written examination, an oral interview is conducted with all successful candidates or with top scorers. The intent of the oral interview is to identify the best pool of candidates for that particular job and to establish a candidate eligibility list which ranks applicants based on their individual scores. Based on each organizational rule, a number of candidates are then invited for an oral interview with hiring managers. The successful candidate(s) are offered a conditional offer letter of employment.
followed by a final offer letter of employment after a pre-employment verification result (State Personnel Board, n.d).

**A More Effective Recruitment and Selection Practice: Competency Modeling**

Governments at all levels are experiencing staffing challenges never experienced before. In order to keep providing the same level of services, public administrators need to adopt strategies to attract the best pool of candidates to fill immediate and future vacancies at all levels of government. Adopting new recruitment and selection strategies becomes vital for administrators to remain competitive in providing services to the community they serve. After all, the ability for governments to provide services effectively and efficiently to the public depends on employing competent civil servants. To attract the most qualified pool of workers, Lavigna and Hayes (2004) have suggested improving on the procedural aspect of the selection process. In other words, governments should enhance and improve their entry selection process to become more user friendly and be more transparent. These changes will enhance governments’ appeal as a preferred place of employment and to retain current workers. Some proposed suggestions come in the form of eliminating arbitrary rules and regulations that restrict the choices for hiring managers and to adopt flexible and appealing hiring procedure; enhance worker friendly personnel policies and create more flexible job descriptions (Lavigna & Hayes, 2004).

Most organizations are tasked with two challenges when dealing with staffing: identifying the most effective means to recruit, select, and retain a high performing workforce, particularly in a very competitive labor market; and, the creation and maintenance of a dynamic culture that can have employees foster growth (Rodriguez et. al., 2002). Employment in the public sector is
guided by rules and regulations in order to prevent abuse and corruption. The goal for public administrator is to utilize fair and equal exams that would allow for a competitive and fair open selection process. This approach is however viewed as slow and cumbersome and is generally assumed to be the most meritocratic method of recruitment. The problem that arises with this recruitment method is that candidates who possess the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to successfully perform the duties of the job, may not perform the best in a general type of examination. Scholars and professional organizations in Human Resources are advocating for public sector administrators to adopt a competency modeling in the selection and recruitment process (Skorková, 2016). A competency model consists in an analysis for the appropriate skills and knowledge for the position that is being recruited for and create customize testing processes for those particular competencies (SHRM, n.d.). The first scholar that introduced the idea of competency modeling was David McClelland (1973). In his publication, McClelland suggested that academic aptitude and knowledge contest alone did not predict a high job performance but rather competencies would identify the highest job performers. By testing on a full spectrum of competencies, the focus shifts on what the candidate can bring to the organization rather than on a set of pre-determined and narrow skills that cannot be modified and adapted to different duties or tasks. Rather than testing on a narrow job descriptions, organizations that select candidates on a broader skill level such as critical thinking can build the foundation for a high performance workforce. Utilizing a competency modeling provides for the flexibility to place workers where they are most needed in the organization (Rodriguez et. Al., 2002). Competency modeling can be applied in the selection process through a variety of methods such as structured interviews, work sample assessment, online tests, etc. This provides organizations for the flexibility to identify and staff the ideal candidate in the proper job and to link the worker to the business goals of the
organization (Rodriguez et. Al., 2002). Implementing a hiring process oriented towards competencies would represent an important condition for companies to remain competitive on the labor market. Implementing a hiring process based on competencies represents an important factor to select the best candidates from the pool of applicants. The process begins with the planning and establishment of the requirements for both the job and the organization; staffing the right workers for the right job is strongly dependent on the success of the selection process (Armstrong, 2011). The recruitment is a two way matching process: companies have to search and attract potential employees with the required qualification and the applicants aim to attract the attention of the desired employers (Baroukh and Kleiner, 2002).

Alternative Solutions

The inevitable retirement of many baby boomers from the workforce will force public organizations to replace the loss talent in order to provide the same quality of service. Public organizations will be competing with private and nonprofit organizations for talented workers. It is expected that in the near future employers will be experiencing a workforce crisis in the search to replace older employees and their skills. People with the required expertise and knowledge will become harder to recruit and retain, especially if governments are not clear about the skills that they seek (Jacobson, 2010). Workforce planning is viewed as a tool to minimize the workforce crisis expected to occur. Workforce planning is a process designed to ensure that an organization prepares for its present and future needs by having the right people in the right places at the right time. Workforce planning functions as an assessment tool for administrators to determine what actions need to be taken in order to make decisions related to the workforce. It also allows for the assessment of what actions need to be taken into considerations related to
achieving organizational goals and objectives (Jacobson, 2010). It becomes essential for public administrators to establish a workforce planning model. Cummings-White and Diala (2013), suggest that a workforce planning model should be composed of “reviewing the organization’s objectives, analyzing present and future workforce needs to identify necessities, developing and implementing human resources plans, and evaluating, monitoring, and adjusting the plan as necessary” (p. 12). In order to embrace an effective workforce planning, an organization must commit to a long term commitment and must have the support of the executive management to prepare for future organizational changes (Cummings-White & Diala, 2013). Workforce planning is a strategic planning process that human resources practitioners perform when matching the projected staffing needs with the available pool of talent. Workforce planning has been described into four stages: demand, supply, gap, and solution. Demand involves the identification of the organization’s future needs. This can be accomplished through sophisticated projection models or by exposure and knowledge of the labor market. Supply is the analysis of the workforce; identifying trends and knowing the composition of the labor pool is part of the identification of what is missing in the organization. Lastly, solution addresses the short and long term problems (IPMA, 2002). Workforce planning becomes crucial especially when organizations are facing large turnover and loss of institutional knowledge. All public entities but especially local governments must place importance in workforce planning because much of the services provided by the government are tied to the employees’ formal training and education. However, workforce planning is not widely utilized in governmental agencies (Selden & Jacobson, 2007). Some public administrators have argues that workforce planning does indeed take place in organizational but more in a non-structural way. Reasons related to the lack of a formal workforce plan are tied to budget restrictions, low or non prioritization by city managers
and or city councils, the time commitment that is required to develop a robust plan and focus on short-term rather than long-term results (Johnson & Brown, 2004). An effective workforce planning has been defined as a combination of assignments, training and measurement. These elements are interrelated and there cannot be an effective solution without considering them globally. Workforce planning is thus a methodical process with the purpose of selecting the human capital necessary to carry on the mission of the organization (Lacerda, Spiegel, & Neto, 2013).

The workforce planning model has achievable, reportable and measurable outcomes. In order to achieve its goal however, it must be directly linked to organization’s business plan.
RESEARCH AIM

An aging workforce combined with lack of interest in working in the public sector has and will further enhance the problem of staffing qualified workers in key positions. If a solution is not found, public organizations would find challenges in providing services for the community they serve. This problematic will affect all level of government, but in particular, local governments will mostly be affected by the problem. The current research will investigate solutions that local entities can apply when designing a workforce plan.

The research aim is to uncover what local governments can do to face the challenge of workforce management and the loss of knowledge and technical skills from retiring employees. There is a lack of research about the challenges that Los Angeles public sector human resources professionals are experiencing when it comes to recruiting and retaining public sector professionals.
DESIGN

The research methodology proposed for this study is through a qualitative framework of analysis. Data will be collected through in depth interviews with subject matter experts in the field of recruitment and selection in the public sector. Interviews are designed to gather information communicated through the subjects’ knowledge and experience of their professional field. Through this research method the interviewee is challenged by the interviewer on certain topics and this can sometime create a power struggle between the two subjects and can corrupt the collection of data. However, the interactional aspect between interviewer and interviewee is viewed more of an added value rather than an element of corruption. Interviews can provide additional element of information if properly conducted compared to quantitative methods (Wortham et. al., 2011). Interviews allow for the creation of a particular relationship with the interviewee. The connection that is created through questions and answers allows for the formation of a loose structure which is ideal for the developing of a story which allows the responder to articulate in his/her own words their thoughts. When using in depth interviews, the topic of the dialogue may shift depending on the responses provided by the interviewee. It becomes then critical to understand the responders’ social world from their own perspective (Tracy & Munoz, 2011). The reason for a qualitative methodology is to bring to this field a different prospective and framework of analysis. Scholars of public administration have traditionally studied the field through a quantitative perspective leaving the use of qualitative methods substantial weak (Brower, Abolafia, & Carr, 2000). An objective of this study is to provide for a different methodology and approach within the field of public administration that would allow obtaining data that will include social and cultural elements of the participants. Interviews are used as the method of data collection for this study allowing for in depth
exploration of the issues directly from public administrators. The goal is for the interviews to provide for a rich and enlightening data process collection where ideas are built together between the researcher and respondent and meaning is being co-constructed in the same process.

Interviews are semi-structured in a way that questions are predetermined and based on the interviewees’ responses additional and follow-up questions will be asked. The types of questions are open-ended and allowing participants to articulate and expand on their thoughts. As reflected in the literature review, at the federal and state level, administrators have addressed and have started working on the implementing workforce planning to address recruitment challenges. The attention here will be given at the local level; specifically understand if local public administrators have addressed these concerns and what they are doing to solve them. Subject of the study are public administrators, specifically working in the field of Human Resources for a local public entity in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. For the purposes of this study, the Los Angeles greater area is defined as the geographical region that includes Los Angeles County, Ventura County and Orange County. The subjects of the study are in a managerial role within the agency which provides them with a full understanding of the issue at play. The agencies chosen for the study will have more than one thousand employees, must have a full Human Resources department and an operating budget of over $150 million. This is to ensure that the agency has the funds and means to be able to conduct and implement a full workforce plan. Two cities from each county will be surveyed for this study. Interviews will be conducted at the subjects’ place of work and will be recorded. The length of each interview is unknown at this phase however the pre-determined questions should allow responses for about forty minutes. Questions will be divided into categories such as hiring, workforce planning, development and performance. For a list of questions please refer to appendix A.
The discussion and analysis will focus on determining if local public administrators are: 1) experiencing challenges in attracting and recruiting qualified talent; 2) what solutions or strategies are they working towards to solve or mitigate the issue 3) compare if similar problematic occur throughout the greater Los Angeles area or are there discrepancies/differences between the various parts of the region. Responses will be compared to each other in order to identify current themes and trends provided by responders.
DISCUSSION

This section of the study will focus on discussing and analyzing the data that will be collected. Local governments work on issues that affect the community in a direct way such as public safety, planning and development, public works, recreation and many other services that are at the core of local government. In most cases, local agencies work with allocated limited resources when providing those services for their communities. As for any other competing priority, human resources professional will be competing for resources when developing and designing the implementation of an effective workforce plan. Another important finding from this study will be to validate the fact that many agencies do not view or allocate the necessary resources when it comes to develop new strategic ways for recruitment and selection and workforce development. Results from workforce planning and development are not immediate therefore do not receive the necessary attention that other issues are able to obtain. Sometimes the political and social climate undermines the need for change and innovation. Often times, elected officials and appointed officials implement a short term perspective when managing workforce. Development of the labor force requires time, effort and investment and outcomes are not immediately apparent. A quick fix may be more appealing for elected officials as this type of fix can be more visible and viable to their constituents. Also, in relations to budget, a short term solution is much more costly over long term planning (Pynes, 2004). This type of strategy creates a paradox cycle, how can public agencies attract the best pool of candidates if the necessary resources are not being allocated for long term solutions. The stakes at play are very high because the future of public government is dependents by the very way of those public servants that can provide and deliver those vital services. Dealing with an aging workforce and the transfer of skills and knowledge to a new generation of workers is an issue that public
administrators must immediately address in order to avoid a situation where their agencies are no longer capable to provide services to their communities. This study will advance the field of public administration in the field of recruitment and selection and workforce planning by providing concrete experience from current human resources professional. This study will be used as a platform to collect, share and compare how public administrators are addressing the problematic of replacing their retiring workforce. Public Agencies located within the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area, have similar characteristics in common such as a competitive labor market, traffic congestion that impacts their employees’ commute and the high cost of living. From the results of this study public agencies can learn of and apply tools that have worked for other agencies and experiment for solutions that will work in their particular circumstance. Findings from this research will provide with an insight of how local public agencies are dealing with their recruitment issues. In depth interviews provide for a rich data gathering with responders being able to expand and articulate their thoughts on the particular matter. However the study presents certain limitations. Because of the direct interaction with the researcher throughout the interview, respondents may alter and not provide a full or truthful depiction of their recruitment issues. The low participant sample will not allow for generalization but findings can be used for additional studies that can further this area of public administration. Further research in the field of public sector human resources should focus on the development and implementation of tools that will enhance and maximize the workforce selection process for public sector.
CONCLUSION

This paper lays the foundation for an investigative study of the issue of recruitment and selection in the public sector, specifically local governments in the greater Los Angeles area. With increasing competition to attract the most qualified pool of workers, local governments have to re-invent and re-define their selection tools and invest in workforce planning. Most studies of recruitment and selection and workforce planning in public administration have focused their attention at the federal level of government. This study brings the necessary attention to the local level. Through in depth interviews, this study brings a close analysis of the issue directly from the experience of public administrators. The goal of this study will be to learn directly from public sector human resources professionals, the challenges they are experiencing during the recruitment and selection for qualified workers. A unique aspect of this study is that the research will be conducted through a qualitative methodology. This is in contrast with the overwhelming use of quantitative methodology applied to the field of public administration. Through in depth interviews, the study will be able to add new and important elements to the field of public administration. Through this method, the researcher will be able to understand at a deeper level the needs and various problematic that invest local governments in the greater Los Angeles Area. Thorough a qualitative framework of analysis, the study presents itself with some limitations; in fact the results of the study will lack of generalization as the pool of responders will not be large enough to arrive at general conclusions. However, this study presents the potential for development and expansion. The results can be interpreted as a stepping stone to the much needed study of recruitment and selection in local government and further discover what are the most effective tools to attract and retain employees in the current competitive job market.
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Appendix A

Pre-determined questions divided into categories that will be asked to participants:

_Hiring_

- Is your organization experiencing recruitment challenges?
- What factors affect your organization’s ability to recruit and retain mission-critical knowledge and skills?
- How effective are your current sourcing, recruitment, and selection strategies?
- What factors are affecting retention of high performers?
- What positions are the most difficult to fill for your organizations?
- What are the biggest challenges for your organization in the recruitment and selection process?
- What is your turnover likely to be in the next year? In the next five years?
- Are your main competitors experiencing similar recruitment issues?
- Do your labor competitors offer significant different terms and condition of employment? Do you lose workforce to your competitors?
- Do you lose employee to the private sector? If you do, from one specific department or throughout the organization?
- Are there important changes to the education and or training system that is affecting your pool of qualified candidates?

_Workforce Planning_

- How will the environment of your organization impact the workforce? How are your customer demands expected to change?
- How will technology change the way your organization provides services to the community that you serve?
- Is your organization planning on restructuring the work or redistributing the workload?
- Are job functions and competencies changing throughout the organization?
• Which current job functions and workforce competencies are critical to the mission and goals of the organization? Which will no longer be required in 3-5 years? What new job functions and competencies will be needed in 3-5 years?
• Are there any plans to create or expand any type of new services to the community that you serve? What are the priorities of the council or board of directors?
• Are you eliminating or scaling back services? Will programs or people be relocated or redistributed?

Development and Performance

• How well are managers and supervisors prepared to coach employees for new opportunities and career growth?
• Have individuals for leadership positions identified, assessed, and developed?
• How well is knowledge transferred among employees to retain mission-critical competencies?
• What forms of training and development are needed to teach mission-critical competencies in the next 3-5 years?
• How does your organization’s employee performance management system enable the entire workforce to be successful?
• How effective are supervisors at dealing with poor performance?
• How well do managers provide formal and informal recognition?
• How well does leadership hold managers accountable for managing people?