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February | 2022
HIRING

Planner-City of Prescott, WI

Posted January 3, 2022 | Closes January 21, 2022
4:30 PM

Planner City of Prescott, WI Salary: \$54,995 (\$26.44/Hour) plus benefits The City of Prescott located 20 minutes from St. Paul, MN and the eastern Twin Cities...

Engineering Technician-City of St. Francis, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 31, 2022
11:59 PM

Engineering Technician City of St. Francis, WI The City of St. Francis is seeking an Engineering Technician to assist the...

Clerk/Treasurer-Village of North Prairie, WI

Posted December 10, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022
5:00 PM

Job Posting – Village of North Prairie Clerk/Treasurer Waukesha County, WI Application Deadline January 21, 2022, by 5:00 p.m. central time...

Clerk-Treasurer-Village of Johnson Creek, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 17, 2022

Clerk-Treasurer Village of Johnson Creek, WI The Village of Johnson Creek, the fastest growing community in Jefferson County which embraces small town charm with big...

Clerk/Treasurer-Village of Belmont, WI

Posted January 6, 2022 | Closes January 28, 2022
4:00 PM

Village of Belmont, Lafayette County, Wisconsin Clerk/Treasurer An Equal Opportunity Employer The Village of Belmont, WI is seeking a professional to fulfill...

Senior Center Janitor-City of West Allis, WI

Posted December 14, 2021 | Closes January 15, 2022
11:59 PM

Senior Center Janitor City of West Allis, WI Salary: \$17.56 - \$20.07 Hourly Job Type: Permanent part time Department: ...

City Clerk-City of Ripon, WI

Posted December 22, 2021 | Closes January 24, 2022
11:59 PM

City Clerk City of Ripon, Wisconsin City Clerk, Ripon, WI (pop. 7,833). Ripon is a delightful city in Fond du Lac County, best known as the home of renowned...

Electrician/Electrical Inspector-City of Two Rivers, WI

Posted December 29, 2021 | Closes January 28, 2022
4:00 PM

ELECTRICIAN/ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR City of Two Rivers - Two Rivers Water & Light The Electrician/Electrical Inspector performs skilled work in the installation,...

Fire Chief-Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI

Posted November 8, 2021 | Closes January 30, 2022
11:59 PM

Fire Chief Village and Township of Egg Harbor, WI The combined Township & Village of Egg Harbor are currently seeking to fill the position of Fire Chief...

Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper-City of Chippewa Falls, WI

Posted December 28, 2021 | Closes January 21, 2022
11:59 PM

City of Chippewa Falls - Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Job Opportunity Parks Maintenance/Zookeeper The City of Chippewa Falls is accepting...

Financial Analyst-City of New Richmond, WI

Posted December 21, 2021 | Closes January 19, 2022
11:00 AM

Financial Analyst City of New Richmond, WI The City of New Richmond is accepting applications for a Financial Analyst to join our team.

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Your Talent Retention Strategy in an Employee-Driven Market

Allyson Watson Brunette, Community Development Consultant



If you've logged onto LinkedIn recently, you've likely been inundated with headlines like "The Great Resignation," "Record Numbers of Workers Quitting," etc. What is on the horizon may look bleak through the headlines, but there are actionable steps you can take in your organization to *keep the talent you already have*.

How and When We Work Is Up for Negotiation

In researching this article, I spoke with Anne Wettstein from HR Consulting Partners, a private human resource service provider that works with both public and private sector clients, about what is motivating employee movement. Anne shared, "people aren't moving for [more] money, they're looking for flexibility, cultural fit, and work-life balance." How can you reposition the fringe benefits of local government employment to fit contemporary expectations?

Paid Time Off

The traditional mindset around PTO has been that this is a longevity benefit. This mindset doesn't pair with upcoming generations who value work-life balance and often stay with one organization for shorter timeframes. Granting additional paid time off to an exempt employee shouldn't negatively impact an organization if you've hired the right person.

A trend in the private sector is moving toward a shared bank of paid leave. This discourages abuse of leave such as sick leave to take personal time off and entrusts employees with the ability to use their time when needed, as needed, without questioning if they needed the time off because they were ill, had a family emergency arise, or simply wanted to take a day off.

The City of De Pere's Human Resources Director, Shannon Metzler, shared that years ago employees would compete for overtime hours. Now, the culture around work has changed. "Dedication to a job doesn't equate to endless hours. [People] no longer live to work. They happen to have a job, yes, but they have a personal life that comes first."

Flexibility in Hours

Increasing flexibility within roles, especially for office staff, can reduce the need to utilize PTO for minor appointments, such

as a doctor appointment or a family commitment. COVID-19 has educated many municipal organizations that much of their work can be done remotely or during different hours of the day while still providing core customer services to residents. If your organization does not yet have a remote work policy, it's time to draft one.

The City of De Pere, with employee input, shifted their summer hours (longer Mondays-Thursdays and half-day Fridays) to a year-round model. By having city services available to residents from 7:30 am-5:00 pm on Mondays-Thursdays, they now offer a wider spread of business hours for their residents. Half-day Fridays (7:30-11:30 am) are resoundingly popular with team members and this has not been met negatively by residents. Office employees in De Pere also can flex their shifts to anywhere from 6:30 am-5:30 pm and that can take the form of four 10-hour shifts, five eight-hour shifts, etc. Some employees continue to work a portion of the week remotely, as well.

Night Meetings Are Work Hours, Too

Evening meetings are a mainstay of local government, but these hours can take a toll on employee well-being and their work-life balance. The Village of Ashwaubenon allows employees who regularly attend night meetings to flex their hours to meet both core business hour commitments and the hours worked in the evening. It's based on communication and mutual trust, Ashwaubenon Village Manager Joel Gregozeski explained. The City of De Pere provides a bank of 40 hours of administrative leave per annum to department heads. These individuals have the option to log night meeting hours as administrative leave or flex their schedule around evening commitments.

A Creative Approach to Short-Term Benefits

Longevity-tied benefits like retirement packages are realized decades after employees join an organization. It takes some creativity to find ways to make benefits work for your employees earlier in their career.

Short-Term Disability Insurance

An area that the private sector is tackling in recruitment is the addition of short-term disability coverage, including paid maternity/paternity leave. The Town of Ledgeview offers short-term disability to its employees experiencing serious illness or injury, including more commonplace events like pregnancy or surgery rehabilitation. Eligibility begins after just seven days and this insurance pays a percentage of take-home pay to employees (instead of requiring them to tap into their vacation or sick leave banks first). This insurance is pennies on the dollar in terms of employer expense but can be a major point of attraction for younger candidates starting their own families.

On-Site Wellness

The Village of Ashwaubenon partnered with local hospital system Bellin Health to create the A+ Clinic in their village hall. Employees and their families can stop into the clinic for physical examinations, occupational therapy, and the types of walk-in services that you might visit a family doctor for, such as vaccinations, and common ailments. This service is provided at no out-of-pocket expense.

Financial Wellness

Financial wellness is much more than offering retirement matches. COVID-19 exacerbated financial concerns for many families, and financial health can be a major contributor to stress. Anne Wettstein shared a concept of bringing in a financial advisor (at company cost) on an annual contract to provide one-on-one financial wellness visits with employees. Employees can confidentially discuss any financial topic of concern they might have (such as building credit, paying off debt, etc.) with no expectation of buying or investing from this advisor. This benefit can be particularly helpful for younger employees who are facing student loan debt, an overpriced housing market, and may be new to saving for retirement.

(See also the HR Matters column “Benefits You Didn’t Know You Offered” on page 21 of this magazine.)

Encouraging Feedback and Effective Communication

The time for employee feedback shouldn’t be solely in the form of an exit interview (although those are important, too). Ongoing communication between team members and leadership are critical for employee retention.

Reposition the Annual Performance Review

Move away from the report card style performance reviews! Instead, treat these as “stay interviews” – a key strategy to keep the employees you already have in lieu of a future exit interview. Focus them less on issuing grades and more on meaningful conversation.

The City of De Pere engages in semi-annual Employee Check-Ins. These casual, 30-minute meetings are intended to get supervisors and employees *talking to one another*. Employees are asked to highlight 2-3 things they’ve accomplished, identify 1-2 goals, and can talk through a bucket of question prompts with their supervisor such as: “What would you like to be different in your workplace?” or “What are you learning here?” or “What do you want to learn?” These check-ins can bring to light valuable opportunities to cross-train, invest in professional development, or fine-tune roles.

The Town of Ledgeview engages in a similar annual approach. Their Expectations Exchange is structured as an employee and supervisor discussion around accomplishments, challenges, and what they expect from the organization as well as what they can actively contribute to the organization. The supervisor also answers the expectation/contribution question from the standpoint of how they can best support their employee.

Personality Insights and Communication Training

A less conventional workplace benefit is bringing in an outside professional to train your team in working together effectively. The Town of Ledgeview has a DiSC Analysis (soft skills training and personality analysis) completed for all new hires by an outside consultant. This is paired with

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HUNSTAD

Ashley Hunstad, Administrative Assistant - Milton

Previous work experience: I most recently worked as an Area Human Resources and Housing Manager in Yellowstone National Park.

Why did you decide to join the local government workforce? I recently moved to Wisconsin from Montana to be closer to family. When I started looking for jobs I saw the position available for the City of Milton. Having only lived in Milton for about six months, I thought it would be a wonderful opportunity to immerse myself in my new community. I have always had an interest in how things work and I felt like working for the local government would be a good way to experience all of it hands-on.

training on how each personality type engages in a team setting, communication preferences, etc. These trainings are not limited to office staff in Ledgeview – every member of the organization, including public works, participates in these trainings once yearly. Just because a role doesn't come with an office does not mean that it does not involve teamwork or communication.

Managing Turnover Well When It Does Happen

Even the best organizations inevitably have some talent movement. How your organization positions itself for talent turnover will influence how well you weather such movement.

Tenure Isn't What It Used to Be

The days of hiring a 20 or 30-something into the role they will eventually retire from are long-gone. Knowing that, your goal in recouping your return on investment in a new hire needs to occur in a shorter timeframe. The experts I met with didn't land on one timeline, but on average those in recruitment noted that 3-5 years would be a goal in how long an individual might stay in an organization in a leadership role. Joel Gregozeski shared: "Three years is an opportunity for a good return on investment for [a] highly motivated and driven team member."

Ambition May Fuel an Exit

If you have an ambitious employee who seeks to widen their skillset and move up, but that opportunity doesn't exist within your organization – they may move on. This isn't a bad thing necessarily. Shannon Metzler shared, "99% of our employees who leave our organization are leaving to retire, but we don't have a closed-door policy that someone couldn't return in the future if they move up elsewhere ... we encourage their growth elsewhere, too."

Position Description Refreshers

Use the exit of an outgoing employee as an opportunity to refresh their position description. You can't, after all, entice top talent to your organization if you don't have a compelling position description. Does the position describe the values of your organizational culture? Does it adequately describe the attitude needed to take on the position responsibilities? Outgoing employees should be tapped for insights into how accurate the description of their role truly is. What did they like/dislike in their role? What did they have time to complete vs. what fell to the wayside? Keep descriptions refreshed to ensure their accuracy.

Thank you to the individuals who contributed to this piece: Sarah Burdette (Town of Ledgeview), Joel Gregozeski (Village of Ashwaubenon), Shannon Metzler (City of De Pere), and Anne Wettstein (HR Consulting Partners).

About the Author:

Allyson is a professional consultant in community and economic development, working with both municipal and private clients. She earned her Master of Public Administration from Marist College and spent nine years working in local government roles. Allyson joined The Great Resignation in late 2021, leaving the municipal world to self-reflect, and decided to start her own firm. She loves the flexibility that self-employment offers, which gives her more time to read, cook, and explore Wisconsin with her husband and greyhound. Contact Allyson via LinkedIn or at allysonwbrunette@gmail.com



WEBER

Kurtis Weber, Public Works - Strum

Previous work experience: I'm originally from northern Wisconsin and graduated from UW-River Falls. I began work in the fisheries industry immediately after school then transitioned to work in the public sector.

Why did you decide to join the local government workforce? Working locally allows for a more balanced lifestyle between both family and career, including working with a smaller, more intimate workforce. The dynamics of a small community are never-ending and require you to apply previous knowledge and experiences to problem solve or be able to learn on the fly. Some duties involve a more formal approach, including certifications from the state level (water, sewer, DOT), but overall my work is about professional and community-oriented gain. Strum, although small, has lots to offer as a unique and beautiful community.