

National Park Service



Concession Program Human Capital Strategy

WASO Concessions Program



Goal: To ensure that a professional and well-trained workforce manages and implements the National Park Service Concessions Program

Objectives:

- Strengthen and professionalize NPS Concession program staff by developing and implementing a comprehensive human capital strategy.
- Recruit, Support and promote employees with the expertise, knowledge and skills to accomplish NPS Concession Program short and long term goals.

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Guidance: NPS Director's Legacy Goals

- Ensure recruitment and retention of a professional and well-trained workforce to manage and implement the NPS Concessions Program



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Guidance: 2005 Concession Management Audit Report Recommendation



- Develop a human capital strategy that promotes training, career development and retention
- Limit the use of collateral duty personnel to perform concession management functions
- Develop a network of technical experts to support and train remaining collateral duty personnel

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Guidance: NPS Concession Careers Future Report Recommendations

- Identify strategies to promote more effective management of the NPS Concession Program
- Develop a comprehensive Concessions Program employee database
- Unify the hiring and selection process to promote a consistent approach for matching expertise to overall program goals
- Adopt the “circuit rider” concept to address/mitigate turnover and training issues related to collateral duty employees in parks

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Methods:

- Develop an effective strategy to recruit and retain employees with appropriate business skills
- Develop a structured professional concessions career path
- Develop a comprehensive training program to complement improved recruitment and retention policies

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Methods: (continued)

- Develop a network of technical experts “circuit riders” to support and train collateral duty employees in parks
- Create a balanced staffing plan to ensure that all parks maintain staffing levels commensurate to the volume and complexity of the their concession activities

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NPS Concession Program Initiatives: September 2005 Regional Concessions Chiefs and Solicitors Meeting



- Created the “Concessions Contracting Life Cycle:” to identify key steps in developing and managing concessions contracts
- Identified “Contract Management” at the park level as one of six key components in the life cycle
 - Important for encouraging quality visitor services and promoting compliance with existing concession contract obligations
 - Effective contract management will yield accurate and current financial and operational data, along with a practical understanding of possible improvements and recurring deficiencies
 - Determined that a well-trained park staff is vital to effective contract management and timely prospectus development
 - Concluded that a workforce analysis of existing NPS Concession personnel would be a key ingredient of an effective human capital strategy

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November 2005 National Concessions Meeting

- Refined the “Concessions Contracting Life Cycle”
- Resolved that conducting a workload/workforce analysis is critical to the future success of the NPS Concession program
- Determined that the workload/workforce analysis should focus on park-specific staffing needs initially, followed by regional and WASO studies thereafter
- Determined that an effective park staffing plan would hinge on factual information about:
 - Existing personnel – who and how many
 - Distribution of personnel (Where do they work?)
 - Necessary skills and qualifications (What makes an effective concessions specialist?)
 - Skills Gap (What training is needed?)
 - Park Needs (How many contracts are managed? How complex are the contracts?)
- Identified a committee to conduct the analysis in FY 2006

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NPS Concession Program Action Plan FY 2006- 2007

Step 1: Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis

- Focus on identifying park-level concessions program management strengths and weaknesses
- Conduct a survey of experienced NPS Concession personnel nationwide to gather information on
 - Existing staffs
 - Official titles, job series, grades
 - Percentage of FTE spent on concession management duties by title, series, and grade (determine level of reliance of “collateral personnel”)
 - Specific types of concession management duties being performed (and that should be performed)
 - Identify “best practices” and vital training requirements

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Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis (Continued)



- Conduct follow up survey to build on the knowledge base and gather more detailed information to break down the concession management function by activity performed, who performs the activity and time spent on:
 - Tracking accounts
 - Responding to complaints
 - Reviewing financial data
 - Drafting prospectuses
 - Working with regional and WASO/Program concessions program personnel
 - Touring/monitoring facilities
 - Reviewing rates
 - Developing PMIS statements/packages
 - Issuing IBPs and/or CUAs

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Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis (Continued)



- Conduct interviews with NPS Concession program upper-level staff to identify, among other things:
 - The skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to perform successful park-level concession management duties
 - The types of duties and responsibilities that must be performed at the park level
 - Relative volume and/or complexity of park concession operations to help determine adequacy of skills and staffing levels, and what staff and/or skills are necessary

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Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis (Continued)

- Develop a comprehensive data base of concession employees, both dedicated and collateral duty to include the location, name, series, grade, percent of duties dedicated to concessions, etc.
- Analyze and use the information gathered by these means to, among other things:
 - Compare relative park workload to personnel allocated for concession management (“staffing analysis”)
 - Determine whether focus of known, actual staff activity effectively serves the concession management function
 - Determine how many FTE are required by each park to discharge its concession management responsibilities
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses in staffing qualifications and skills to assist in designing necessary training and identifying essential competencies
 - Establish recruitment and retention standards
 - Review existing position descriptions to determine if they adequately describe the level, volume and complexity of concessions management duties in a given park

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Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis (Continued)

- Ascertain whether a concession career field can be developed and structure an appropriate career path
- Develop a thoughtful, realistic staffing plan to address the overall NPS Concession program needs, sufficiently detailed to support requests for funding increases if indicated
- Establish standards, policies, and guidance to assist the parks (through regional and WASO involvement) in managing their concession workloads in a professional, expert manner
- Review existing competencies to determine if they accurately reflect the background and training requirements needed to perform the duties of concession specialists and collateral duty personnel

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Conduct Workload/Workforce Analysis (Continued)

- Established competencies have included:
 - legal framework
 - general management techniques
 - hospitality industry
 - accounting, feasibility, and financial analysis
 - Communications
 - interpersonal skills/human relations

- Identify new or modified competencies as necessary
- Identify training needs
- Evaluate existing training opportunities
- Develop competency-based training programs for all levels of concession program staff