

FY 2009 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Use this form to submit a problem statement

Submittal via E-mail is preferred: Save the form and give it a new, descriptive name, then send to:
barnie.p.jones@odot.state.or.us

ODOT Research Unit
200 Hawthorne Ave. SE, Suite B-240
Salem, OR 97301-5192

Office Phone: (503) 986-2700
FAX Phone: (503) 986-2844

TITLE

PEA-09-03 Effective methods to deal with recruitment and retention of civil engineers at state DOTs

PROBLEM (Description of need)

Oregon DOT has documented a number of risks in its ability to deliver transportation projects relating to recruitment and retention of engineers and other technical disciplines, including gaps in a number of specializations, "one-deep" in a number of key technical disciplines, and a need to address critical workforce needs of the agency in order to retain core competencies. While the agency is continuing to develop strategies to deal with the issues, gaps exist in our knowledge of how best to focus our efforts. We do not know the best ways to engage our potential entry-level workforce to consider civil engineering as a profession and ODOT as an employer of choice. We also have limited knowledge of why technical and engineering employees choose to leave the agency after investing a considerable number of years in public sector employment.

PROPOSED RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT OR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITY

The proposed research would use appropriate best practices, survey and interview techniques to gain knowledge of key motivators and determine the best ways to:

- Encourage students (lower division and pre-college) to select engineering as a career.
- Persuade engineering students to select civil engineering as a profession.
- Convince new civil engineering graduates to select ODOT as their preferred employer.
- Induce existing ODOT engineers to continue with the agency for at least a substantial portion of their professional career.
- Influence early, mid and late career professional engineers to select ODOT as a preferred employer.

The research would consider all attributes of the work environment at ODOT for professional engineers that have a bearing on career decisions (salary, benefits, nature of work, work/life balance, etc.) to determine the best way to package our comparative advantages as an employer. The research would allow ODOT to determine the target demographic of our potential workforce that would find our advantages as an employer the most attractive. The research would determine the most effective way for us to engage our target potential workforce.

BENEFITS

Findings from this research would allow ODOT to more effectively focus its efforts to attract and retain critical engineering and other technical talent by conducting targeted recruitment and retention activities. Cost savings would accrue from increased knowledge of how and where to engage potential

employees and from reduced turnover among existing early and mid-career employees.

CONTACT PERSON:

FOR RESEARCH UNIT USE ONLY

Name, address phone number and e-mail

Mary Cotter
355 Capitol St NE, Rm 205
503.986.3668
Mary.T.COTTER@odot.state.or.us

NCHRP
SPR
POOLED FUND
STATE
OTHER

Dave Lutz
355 Capitol St NE, Rm 226
503.986.3819
David.j.Lutz@odot.state.or.us

PLEASE RENAME THE COMPLETED FORM WITH A SHORT NAME RELATING TO THE RESEARCH TOPIC.
Submittal of this form via E-mail is preferred. Send to: barnie.p.jones@odot.state.or.us