

Radiation Control Program Faces Loss of Radiation Experts and Shortage of Qualified Candidates

A “Human Capital Crisis” exists in Radiation Control Programs throughout the United States. Texas faces much the same difficulties as other government agencies regarding:

*** competitive pay and benefits * active recruitment *reform of antiquated, complicated hiring practices**

In Texas, an estimated total of 45 senior personnel at the Bureau of Radiation Control are already or will soon be eligible for retirement (within the next five years). A few years ago, retirements began to significantly reduce the number of senior employees. As of November 2001, the Division of Compliance and Inspection had 10 professional positions unfilled due to retirements or persons leaving for better pay.

State salaries do not compete with private sector salaries. For purposes of comparison, Texas state benefits are considered by the Texas Department of Health to be 22.08% of salary. Benefits in the private sector is considered similar but is not known.

A critical shortage exists in the supply of qualified radiation safety professionals throughout a broad spectrum of activities within the United States....
...the current imbalance between supply and demand will significantly worsen in the near term after which it will soon become untenable.
The shortage of qualified radiation safety professionals will compromise the rigorous oversight necessary for the continued safe use of radiation for the benefit of the citizens of the United States.
 Health Physics Society, “Human Capital Crisis in Radiation Safety,” August 2001

Solution Recommendations

Salary Comparison of Health Physicists – 2001

Employment Sector	Entry Level Experience	Medium Level Experience	High Level Experience
Private Utility and Non-Utility	\$38,500 to \$67,900	\$45,700 to \$75,800	\$65,000 to \$96,000
Texas Government	\$30,432 to \$43,620	\$34,308 to \$56,304	\$41,304 to \$63,672

<p>Policy Revision on Rehiring Retirees and Use of Salary Savings The legislature has made provisions to allow the employee to return to employment. Previously, TDH granted a waiver from posting the position so that the individual could be rehired without interviewing other applicants. This policy was recently discontinued. Reversal of this policy would encourage rehiring experienced employees and eliminate the time-intensive and expensive recruitment process. TDH policy should allow for using BRC salary savings for technical staff training and retention bonuses.</p>	<p>Legislation - Retention Pay The legislature authorized retention pay up to \$3000 in cases when an employee has received an outside job offer. (Art. IX, Sec. 3.07). Two problems exist with this statute--funding is unavailable and the increase is not substantial enough to offset the \$20,000 to \$30,000 increase that employees have been offered by entities such as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Legislative changes could remedy this situation.</p>	<p>Legislation -Pay Increases Legislative increases have not kept pace with private sector salaries and cost of living increases. During the past decade, salaries in private industry have increased 50% to 90% compared to Texas increases which have been minimal if at all. (None since 1994 except monthly increase of \$100 in 1998 and 2000, and 4% or \$100 whichever is greater in 2001 in addition to a small increase in longevity pay.)</p>	<p>Legislation - Funding for B 15 Level Job Classifications The legislature created an additional job classification (B 15 level) that could be used for health physicists; however no additional funding was provided. A rider similar to TNRCC’s would be useful to TDH. <i>Appropriation: targeted Salary increase. Notwithstanding other appropriations made by this Act relating to salary increases, in addition to amounts appropriated above to the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, there is hereby appropriated \$650,000 in fiscal year 2002 and \$1,300,000 in fiscal year 2003 out of the General Revenue Fund for the purpose of making salary increases for select job classes.</i></p>	<p>Legislation - Change in FTE Cap and Budgeting - Intern Program A paid intern program would help to develop the workforce; however limits on salary and FTEs prevent it from being used. Two current BRC managers were interns while pursuing degrees at the University of Texas several years ago.</p>
---	--	---	---	---

