

## **Appendix B – Guided Inquiry**

The purpose of guided inquiry questions is to help stimulate critical thinking for each step of the USGS Workforce Planning Model. Please use this document as a guide; it is not necessary to answer all the questions below. The questions align with the five steps of the USGS Workforce Planning Model.

### **Strategic Direction**

Identify the expected program changes over the next 1-3 years (5 years if possible). What will drive these changes?

What is the short-term and long-term business plan/science strategy?

What challenges exist in the emerging science, economic and political environments?

What legislative, policy or regulatory changes may impact your organization?

What are your organizational strengths and challenges?

How well positioned is your organization to survive change (e.g. increase or loss of cooperators, budget, or program, etc.)?

What are your anticipated sources and the diversity of funding?

How constant do you expect funding to remain over the next 1, 3 and 5 years?

What are your key relationships and what could impact those relationships?

How does your business plan align with science strategy and direction?

### **Demand, Supply, Discrepancies**

#### ***Supply***

How well does the current workforce align/support your business plan/science strategy?

What workforce sectors (Federal, volunteers, emeritus, contractors, interns, etc.) are present within the current workforce and what is their contribution?

How many employees are at each organizational level, for example in Headquarters, Area, Center?

How flexible is your workforce? Does your organization make use of other than permanent appointments? Other than Full Time appointments? Job sharing?

What is the grade structure (distribution) for these series? Are you experiencing grade creep?

What is the current distribution of employee years of service?

What are the diversity statistics (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) for this field?

Are volunteers utilized? If so, how sustainable is the volunteer workforce?

Do the skills of your current workforce meet current mission needs?

### ***Demand***

What are the characteristics of the desired end-state workforce within the next 3 - 5 years?

What new occupations and/or skills will be needed and at what level; why are they important? Are they available?

What new capabilities will be added or old capabilities not continued?

How could your organization leverage workforce capabilities with other USGS organizations to accomplish your mission?

How will jobs and workload change as a result of technological advancements; industry changes; and economic, social and political conditions? What are the consequences/results of these changes?

How could a multi-sector workforce, including contractors, non-permanent and other employee categories be utilized within the future workforce?

What will it take to keep the future workforce challenged and dedicated to the organization?

How many employees did you hire in the last FY? In the last 5 FY? What type (Permanent, Temporary, Term, or Student?) What is the grade distribution? Can you hire at lower grade levels? What are the years of service distribution (previous experience)?

How many employees separated in the last FY? In the last 5 FY? What type (Permanent, Temporary, Term, or Student?) What is the grade distribution? What are the years of service distribution (previous experience)? Are you experiencing brain drain? Are you trying to move to lower grades?

Comparing permanent employees against all employees, what is your turnover rate? Retention rate? Net hire ratio? Separation rate of resignations and involuntary separations? What percentage of your hires are permanent? Should you look at hiring more other than permanent appointments?

How many employees are currently eligible to retire; how many in each of the next five years? What are the historic rates of retirement? How long after eligibility are they retiring?

How many employees are projected to retire, compared with employees eligible to retire?

How will your organization's expected losses affect its ability to do its work?

### ***Discrepancies***

What differences exist between the current and future workforce, i.e. will there be a future surplus or shortage in a particular staffing level and/or skill?

How will those differences evolve over the next 3 - 5 years?

What are the anticipated changes between your current and future organizational structure?

Are there opportunities to use in-sourcing or out-sourcing to accomplish the work?

### **Develop Action Plan**

What is your plan for bridging the gap between the current and future workforce in the next 3-5 years?

Will current positions need to be recruited and what will change in the future positions?

How will a pipeline be developed to identify and recruit highly qualified performers?

What is your strategy for recruiting a diverse group of candidates?

How will essential organizational knowledge and key personnel be retained within the workforce?

What types of incentives will be needed to retain key staff?

How will you ensure that all employees are receiving an opportunity to participate in career, professional and leadership development?

What developmental opportunities exist and how will they be utilized?

How will current employees be developed to meet future mission requirements, succession and individual success?

What will be implemented to improve performance and reward superior performance (both monetary and non-monetary)?

How will leadership/management engage employees?

### **Implement Action Plan**

Who is responsible for implementing the identified strategies?

What are the milestones for implementation?

What are the expected outcomes of the strategies?

Who will be held accountable for each action?

### **Monitor, Evaluate, Revise**

How should actions be monitored and reported?

How will you measure progress towards outcomes?

How will progress be communicated to stakeholders (e.g. leadership, employees, partners, etc)?