

**News in Brief: State Keeps Tabs on Retirees to Lure Them Back****State Keeps Tabs on Retirees to Lure Them Back**

California state agencies are just several months away from a huge talent shortage. To cope with the problem, the state is creating a database of retired state employees who are interested in going back to work part time.

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**State Keeps Tabs on Retirees to Lure Them Back**

Like most governmental bodies, California state agencies are just several months away from a huge [talent shortage](#).

During the next two to five years, 48 percent of managers within the state agencies will be eligible for retirement, says Andrew Armani, deputy secretary for information technology at California's State and Consumer Services Agency, an umbrella organization of 16 different state agencies.

"That doesn't mean they will all necessarily retire, but we realize that we need to be prepared in case they do," he says.

To address the issue, the agency is working with a number of its member bureaus to create a database of retired state employees who are interested in going back to work part time.

The initiative, currently known as the Retired Annuitant Database Project, will allow state retirees to enter information regarding their department and classification, skills and employment goals, says Jennifer Withers, manager of multimedia services at the California Franchise Tax Board, which is developing the database.

"This is really an untapped market of talent," Armani says. "These employees go away and right now the only way they come back to work is if they contact us."

State employers will be able to log on to a Web site and search for potential employees to fill job openings. The database is expected to go live on a pilot basis just for member agencies within the California State and Consumer Services Agency by the end of October, Withers says.

California's state agencies hope the database will ease the pain of the pending talent shortage without forcing them to shoulder the costs of hiring consultants to fill some of these roles, Armani says.

"Retired annuitants are going to cost us a lot less to bring on than consultants," Armani says.

The California Public Employees' Retirement System, which is helping to collect names for the database, hopes that the online tool will help it handle its increasing workload, says Chris O'Brien, director of HR.

CalPERS, which provides retirement and health benefits to more than 1.4 million public employees, retirees and their families, has the dual challenge of dealing with the pending talent shortage while also needing to process more pension payouts as the baby boomers retire, O'Brien says.

"Everyone is concerned about people leaving, but we have this additional concern about whether we are going to have enough people to handle the growing workload," she says. CalPERS will be marketing the database to its members during the next few months.

The California initiative is fairly progressive and one that both public and private entities should keep their eyes on, says Bruce Barge, Los Angeles market leader in human resource management at Buck Consultants, which is a division of Affiliated Computer Services.

But state agencies also need to implement programs to grow their talent pipe-line, he says. "The database alone isn't going to solve their problems," he says.

California's State and Consumer Services Agency realizes this, Armani says, adding that the database is just one of several initiatives going on within the state to address the talent shortage.

“The first thing we have to do is make it easier for people to become state employees,” he says. Currently, it can take as long as 12 months for people to pass the exams and find a spot within a state agency.

“Our problem is not unique to California,” he says. “We need to grow more state employees without spending a lot more money.”

—*Jessica Marquez*

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The image shows two covers of the magazine 'Workforce'. The left cover features the headline 'Double Vision' and a photograph of a man. The right cover also features a photograph of a man. The magazine title 'Workforce' is prominently displayed at the top of both covers.

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