

**NASPE EVA N. SANTOS  
COMMUNICATIONS AWARD**

**STATE OF MAINE**

**DEVELOPING  
MAINE STATE  
GOVERNMENT'S  
WORKFORCE FOR OUR  
FUTURE (2025)**

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## **1. Description of the submission**

The State of Maine's Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) submits for nomination for the Eva N. Santos Communication Award its "Futurist" study and didactic workshops to determine the likely work and workforce requirements for state workers in the year 2025.

Foresight consultants conducted interviews and research, did a literature search, and employed other foresight methodologies to answer seventeen questions about the likely future of our work and workforce and how a workforce development plan could lead state workers to a desired future rather than one that happens to us. For example, BHR leaders wanted to know what future technology would be available, what services citizens will likely expect from government, and what knowledge and skills will likely be required for a fully functioning state workforce in 2025. ([see appendix for list of questions](#))

After leading an interim work session with various statewide HR participants, the consultants used the comments and reactions to various possible futures ("scenarios") to prepare their final report. The substance of this final report was again presented to the HR community and later to key executive leaders, people in a position to make decisions, re-direct resources, and submit legislation. These leaders included department commissioners, the state economist, the CIO, a governor's office policy advisor, and budget director. The HR participants identified several priority tasks that can be accomplished wholly by them, leading to a strong workforce development strategy.

In short, the final report presents four anchor possible futures (each of the four possibilities are under our control and can be modified to incorporate elements from other futures). This will lead to a decision as to what state leaders want the future of state government to look like. Further, the report provided scores of examples of what will likely be the work and workforce of our future, including contextual information for the state (e.g. diminished availability of natural resources and a more ethnically diverse citizenry).

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## **2. How long has the submission been in existence?**

The final report was submitted to BHR on February 20, 2015. The two work sessions mentioned above occurred on February 27, 2015. There will be an implementation workshop in the near future where state leaders, including a strong HR contingent, will discuss and determine

workforce development plans, prioritize tasks, and determine who needs to lead the development of each task.

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### **3. Why was this effort created?**

Maine has the oldest average population, even older than Florida. This is reflected in the state government workforce. Even though many employees are eligible to retire, many are choosing to remain in state service. This delays but does not negate the potential for many future retirements, including employees with critical knowledge in critical jobs.

Workforce development is an umbrella term for activities from recruiting through retention to succession planning. BHR decided not to plan for 2015 or the very near future but for 2025. To assist in projecting what the work and workforce of 2025 will be like, BHR contracted with foresight consultants. This field has been in existence for several decades but is primarily used by corporations who need to have a sense of the future in order to create products and services for what people likely will need or want.

The RFP required the consultants to examine seventeen areas related to the larger topic of what the work and workforce will look like. It was hoped that with these insights, BHR would engage in dialogue with executive leaders to jointly determine what elements of a broad workforce development strategy needed to be addressed earlier than later, and what adjustments to the way “business is currently done” need to be made.

The fact that most participants in the HR leaders discussion and most executive leaders were excited about the likely future will make creating a workforce development plan easier than it might have been. Just as encouraging is the recognition by both groups that much of what the future will bring is under our control. We are not leaves being carried along with the current of the river of the future.

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### **4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of Maine HR?**

At the core of BHR’s *raison d’être* are tasks like recruitment, selection, retention, succession planning, and knowledge management. This look into the future, though somewhat misty, provides enough clarity and direction to allow the HR community to re-design all of these individual elements of workforce development. Further, the insights allow us to prepare the

current workforce for the work of the future with the knowledge and skills likely needed in the future. Preparing the workforce for their work is a core function of any HR entity.

Further, since BHR is looking forward at 2025, HR leaders can determine what needs to be done incrementally so they do not find themselves in 2024 asking what should be done to prepare for the following year. **Insight allows for foresight.**

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## **5. Measuring the effectiveness of this effort**

One measure of effectiveness is whether HR leaders and selected executive leaders wanted to participate in the futurist workshops. They did. Another measure is whether the full report was read and engendered excited discussion. It did. Yet another measure of success is whether the HR community identified priorities, things that they can accomplish and should accomplish. They did.

At the planned implementation workshop, both the HR community and executive leaders will jointly design what needs to be done and the sequence of those actions. In some cases, efforts such as recruitment will be re-designed or re-focused. Other efforts will be created anew such as preparing for 24/7 communication with the public through innovative technologies.

The final measures will be whether these efforts are actually addressed and that the design is working. That is, do succession plan efforts actually lead to increased sharing of knowledge with younger employees by those nearing retirement? Has BHR re-designed certain job classes to better fit the percentage of younger employees who only plan to stay with the state for one to three years?

These outcome measures will only be realized years from now. But the fact that BHR is starting the journey with enthusiasm and direction is indeed a success measure which could not be claimed until now.

## APPENDIX

### REQUIRED TASKS

1. Identify with specificity what services will likely be expected to be delivered by Maine State Government (MSG) in 2025.
2. Identify what the likely relationship will be between MSG and Maine citizens in 2025.
3. Identify the pace of change in what MSG's work will be and workforce requirements will be in 2025.
4. Identify the likely technologies that will be in use within MSG in 2025.
5. Identify the likely economic drivers of the economy and how they will influence MSG in 2025.
6. Identify the likely capabilities of technology available to people in Maine in 2025 and how that technology will influence citizen-government communication, expectations of service delivery, and solving governance problems.
7. Identify what MSG training should be provided to maintain needed knowledge and skills with the workforce of 2025.
8. Identify the key components of a current succession plan/strategy to best prepare for the needs of 2025.
9. Identify the knowledge, skills and likely college degree requirements needed by the workforce of 2025 in order to provide efficient and effective services to those served by state government.
10. Identify the most effective recruitment strategies that will attract people with the knowledge and skills required of the workforce of 2025.
11. Identify the key components of a retention strategy that would retain current talent and position them to assume leadership positions within the workforce of 2025.
12. Identify the likely effect on MSG in 2025 of increased private sector competition for skilled workers.
13. Identify what if any affects robotics will have on MSG in 2025.
14. Identify the likely impact of Maine's changing demographics on MSG in 2025.
15. Identify how the increased use of mobile technologies might influence the delivery of MSG services in 2025, increasing a citizen-centric model of government service delivery.
16. Identify what type of information will likely be on a publicly-accessed MSG dashboard in 2025.
17. Identify what anticipated state or federal legislation might have a dramatic impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of MSG service delivery by 2025.