

Pandemic Emergency Management – Challenge & Tested Solution

Challenge:

Staffing Shortage

Solution:

College Student Placements – A Collaborative and Coordinated Approach Across Participating Agencies

Steps to Implement:

1. Participation House Durham Region reached out to the Dean of Human Service programs at Durham College (included development service worker, behaviour technologist, early childhood education and social service workers).
 - Asked the college to adjust timing of clinic placements to begin now/January 2022.
 - Each program has a 2nd year students, each program has a co-op component currently to assist with the staffing challenge. The college has moved all programs to a 7 week (3 days a week) placement.
 - PHDR was able to get 65 students deployed to be part of the Durham Region work force.
 - Other agencies have taken similar steps and have hired students to and will be paying them (some agencies on a contract basis, and some within newly created classification).
 - PHDR assigned students to each of the agencies based on what the demand was. The need was triaged through a Lead Agency.
 - College helped ensure Quality Assurance Measures were followed (criminal reference checks, vaccinations, etc.). In cases where the student was still awaiting their criminal reference check the college committed to providing attestations.
2. The students attend on their regular placement days and are scheduled/on a voluntary stand-by basis for additional hours when they are not scheduled.
 - PHDR was able to have students fill call-offs and in the capacity of a stand-by because the stand-by positions were posted internally already, and no one had applied.
3. Agencies in the area that wished to collaborate and coordinate students, took on the onboarding process.
 - Most organizations currently have web-based training.

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- HR and QA can be completed for web-based training through post orientation interview/survey as way of confirming training completed and understood.
 - Based on this the QAM Manager would be able to recognize where more training was needed.

Results

1. How effective was this?
 - Very early in the implementation, but currently proceeding well.
2. Was this efficient? Was it quick to implement?
 - Yes. It did not take long to plan and implement.
3. Would you recommend this to other agencies?
 - Yes.

Additional Considerations:

- Have a community point person(s) to handle all questions with College (At PHDR - Director of HR for HR concerns and Director of Community Development for implementation)
 - Having this duality *helped streamline the pain points involved with implementation*
- The students' contracts are for up to 6 months

Lessons learned:

- While waiting for students, we pulled HR reps together from participating agencies to ensure there was not a competitive environment across agencies and a mutual agreement on how to use students to best benefit people supported.
- Build one central list of students from the 65 recruited and who would be willing to work with other organizations within the network, should the current crisis be exacerbated, and there is a need for a back-up for our back-up plan. They are essentially a mobile employment force.
 - Centralized HR agreement (that determines how difference in pay between agencies will be handled, overtime pay, outbreak pay, etc.) is needed.
 - It is currently in process, once complete it will be available to share to other agencies looking to enter into a similar collaboration with other agencies.
- Collected key phone numbers and contact for all agencies in network. We can place calls to one another during emergencies, scenario management and debriefing, reallocation and sharing of resources.

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