



# TMHRA

## Building Better Government From Within: Workforce Excellence and Resident Satisfaction

**Jana Ventura**  
HR Director  
City of Sachse

**Bob Lavigna**  
Senior Fellow, Public Sector  
UKG (Retired)

# What Week is This?



**CELEBRATE**

 **PUBLIC SERVICE**  
**RECOGNITION WEEK**

*Public servants fuel America every day, in every community*

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**MAY 3-9, 2026**





# Building Better Government from Within

Workforce Excellence and Resident Satisfaction

A study by UKG and Polco  
Whitepaper by Barrett and Greene



# What Does the Research Show About HR's Impact on Business Outcomes?

## Private Sector

**“We found relationships between HR management effectiveness and productivity, cash flow and market value”**

Huselid, Mark A.; Jackson, Susan E.; and Schuler, Randall S., “Technical and Strategic Human Resource Management Effectiveness as Determinants of Firm Performance,” *Academy of Management Journal*, 40:1, pp. 171-188, 1997

**“Measures of accounting profits or cash flow were on average in firms having HR practices one standard deviation above the mean on dimension such as HR effectiveness”**

Gerhart, Barry; Wright, Patrick M.; McMahan, Gary C.; and Snell, Scott A. “Measurement Error in Research on Human Resources and Firm Performance: How Much Error is there and How does It Influence Size Estimates?” *Personnel Psychology*, 2000

**“Companies in the top quartiles of EX developed more successful innovations, deriving twice the amount of revenue from their innovations as did those in the bottom quartile”**

Yohn, Denise Lee. “Engaged Employees Create Better Customer Experiences.” *Harvard Business Review*, April 5, 2023

# What Does the Research Show About HR's Impact on Business Outcomes?

Public Sector



# Background

## Research question:

**Do effective HR practices positively affect residents' satisfaction with quality of government services, confidence in government, and quality of life in the community?**

## Research partners:

- Polco (National Community Survey)
- UKG
- Barrett / Greene



# Methodology

- **Survey to assess HR policy and practice effectiveness**
- **Questions – HR mission and policies, recruiting / hiring, retention, training / development, technology, data, performance management, grievances, comp / benefits, workforce / succession planning, working conditions, employee wellbeing, diversity, and labor relations**
- **Surveyed municipalities where Polco had conducted NCS 2022-24**
- **52 responses – scored each survey response 0-100**
- **Analyzed HR scores with Polco NCS scores – also 0-100**
- **Interviewed HR directors of highest-scoring cities**

# Results

Statistically significant positive correlations between specific HR practices and resident satisfaction

	Municipal customer Service	Quality of municipal services	Confidence in municipal government	Quality of life in the community
Employee performance management	✓	✓	✓	✓
HR staff capability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Employee well being	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recruiting and hiring	✓	✓		✓
Compensation and benefits	✓	✓		

# The Effective Practices



# Performance Management

Ongoing communication between manager/supervisor and employee to accomplish organization's strategic objectives

- Limit the number of goals and link to strategy
- Conduct periodic evaluations and monitor compliance, with more frequent performance check-ins
- Conduct stay chats/interviews
- Recognize superior performance, but address poor performance / discipline, especially during probation

*“How can I, as your supervisor, better enable you to carry out your mission? Is it education? Training? Direction? Or is it just staying out of your hair?”*

# Recognition

When employees believe they will be recognized, they are 2.7 times more likely to be highly engaged



# Recognition “Without Spending a Dime”

- Recognize employee achievements at staff meeting
- Surprise employee with Post-it note of thanks
- Put thank-you note on department bulletin board
- Compliment employee within earshot of others (and word will spread)



# Recognition “Without Spending a Dime”

- Mail handwritten note to employee’s home
- Send department-wide email praising employee or team
- Start meetings by recognizing employees and ask employees to recognize each other
- Pull employee aside and ask for her/his opinion



# Recruiting and Hiring

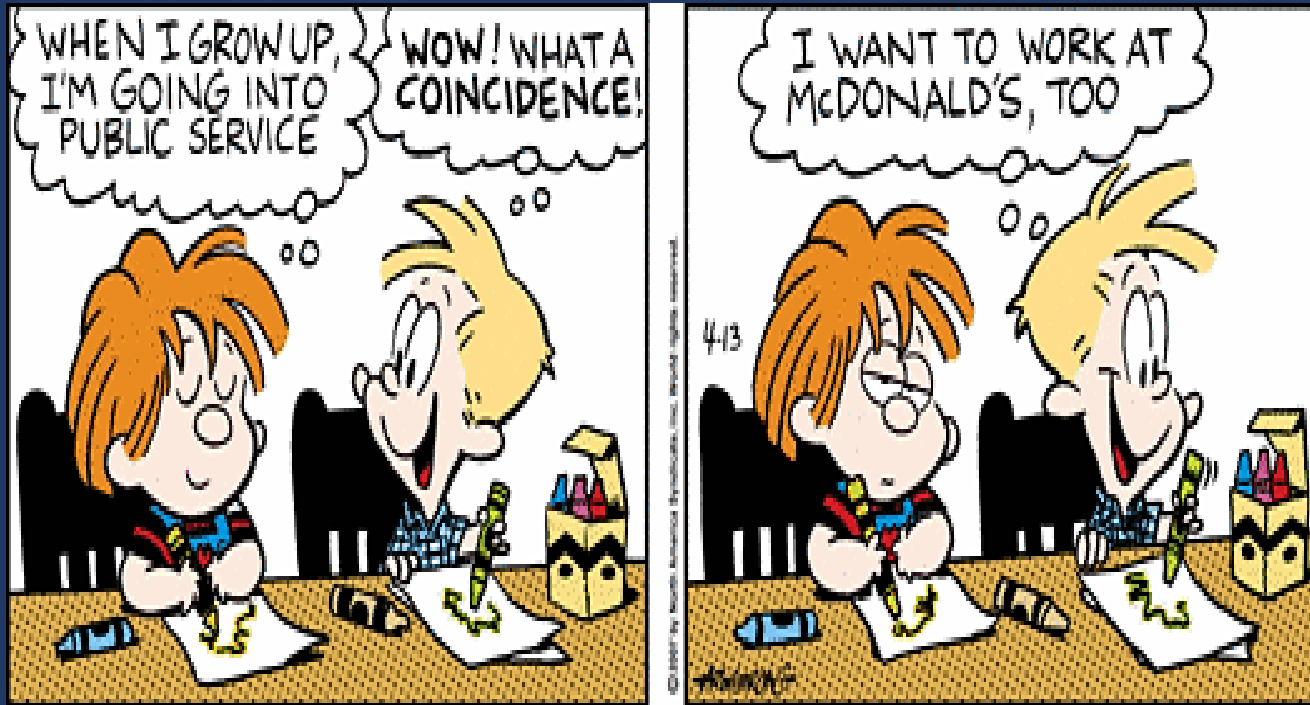
Streamlined process, positive branding, mobile-friendly applications and communication with applicants throughout the process

- Aggressively market opportunities – purpose / fulfillment
- Eliminate degree / experience requirements, focus on skills and OJT
- Monitor time-to-hire and hire quality – and then act
- Apply technology
- Communicate about the process



*“We put the dates of everything, from the written test to the physical test to the interview in the posting. That way, candidates know to set aside time, and they know exactly when we know we’re going to hire.”*

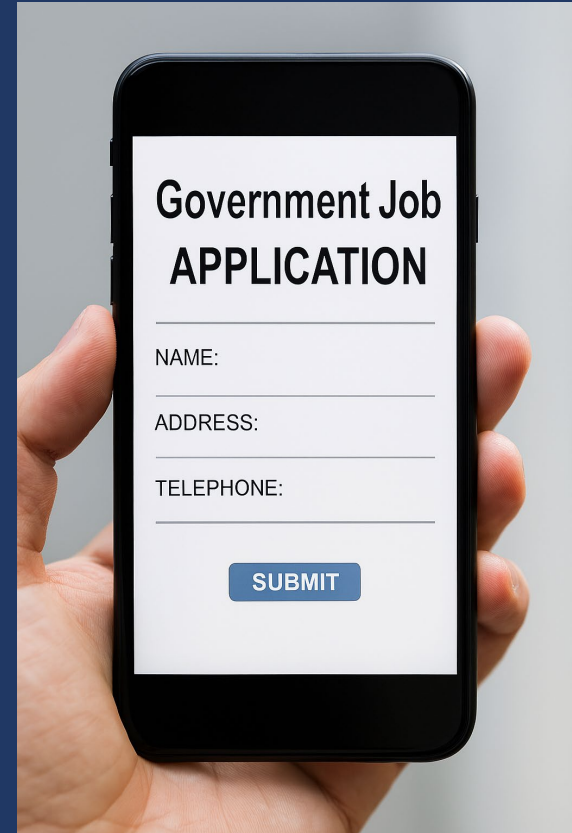
# Government Needs a Branding Makeover



***“Recruiting Talent into Government:  
Ditch the Jargon and Focus Instead on Purpose and Meaning”***

# What Job Seekers Want

- **Jobs posted on job boards – with appealing descriptions**
- **Apply in 30 minutes or less – on handheld device**
- **Confirmation in one day**
- **Follow-up in two weeks**
- **Self-schedule interviews**



# Job Ads

This?

- 39 job responsibilities and 23 requirements
- *Include, but not limited to, stooping, kneeling, crouching, squatting, twisting, crawling, and lifting. Required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects. The employee is frequently required to stand, walk, sit, reach with hands and arms, climb, or balance. The position is required to be exposed to darkness.*

Or This?

*“Join our dynamic team and be part of an organization that values your unique talents. Experience a fulfilling career where you can make an impact and thrive alongside a community of like-minded individuals. Take advantage of this incredible opportunity.”*

# Definitely Not This!

**Provides assigned departments/agencies with advice and guidance to facilitate the development of their respective annual budget; interprets budget guidelines and instructions formulated and disseminated by the Bureau, assist in the development of meaningful and realistic program goals, objectives and workload outputs consistent with the department/agency mandated missions; scrutinizes department/agency budget request for accuracy and consistency with established guidelines; prepares analysis and recommends realistic funding levels consistent with executive policies and priorities, attends legislative budget hearings to support the department/agency budget request on the Bureau's behalf. Prepares impact analysis of department/agency budget appropriations approved by the Legislature for the Governor's consideration develops appropriation and control records of authorized funds; interprets executive policy and legislative intent pertaining to the use of appropriations, expenditure funding, transfer of funds to departments/agencies. Reviews federal grant applications for compliance with state clearinghouse regulations; evaluates and makes recommendations on the need for requested program based on territorial state plans and priorities; coordinates with planning agencies in the review of grant applications; monitors grant awards and maintains budgetary control records. Monitors capital improvement project; insures compliance with established policies and requirements governing and processing and expenditure of funds. Reviews, analyzes, and recommends approval or disapproval of department/ agency requests for personnel actions, travel authorizations in accordance with executive policies. Prepares legislative testimony for the Director or Governor as assigned. Prepares budget narratives to reflect supporting analytical presentations. Conducts analysis to determine the most economical method of obtaining services (i.e. lease vs. purchase). Analyzes department's organization, mission or functions and makes appropriate recommendation on methods to achieve effectiveness, efficiency, and economy of operations. Analyzes existing or proposed functional charts to detect and eliminate duplication of functions in organizational units and to clarify organizational relationships. Reviews proposed organizational changes relative to consolidation, addition, deletion of transfer or organizational units to determine budget and/or programmatic impact. Performs management analysis of governmental organization to ensure efficiency in operations and resource allocation. Prepares revenue and expenditure projections. Assist in the development of guidelines for policies established by Executive Order or Legislative mandates. Analyzes and updates BACIS records affecting assigned departments/agencies. Reviews financial statement/reports to ensure expenditures are in consonance with established policies. Reviews and comments on proposed legislation, writes up proposed legislation to address assigned department/agency needs. Coordinates research, management studies and special projects. Represents the Bureau at Legislative Budget Hearing to answer queries by Senators on budget related matters. Performs related duties as required.**

# Actual Employee Reviews – These?



1.0 Horrible Department

1.0 Very stressful and unfair environment

1.0 Miserable place to work

1.0 Not a good place to work at

1.0 Join for the mission and leave because of management

# Or These?



5.0 Loved it!

5.0 Great environment and people

5.0 Perfect Place to Work

5.0 Love working here

5.0 Fun management!

5.0 Great agency

5.0 Working with people who are as passionate as I am

59% of job seekers would not *apply* to an organization with a bad reputation  
– even if they were unemployed!

# Interview Self-Scheduling

## Choose your interview slot

Pick a day and time that works for you.

Time Zone:  ▼

Duration: 25 minutes

< May 2023 >

Thursday 4th May

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27

9:00 AM - 9:25 AM (EDT)

10:30 AM - 10:55 AM (EDT)

1:30 PM - 1:55 PM (EDT)

Candidate chooses any open interview time slot

# Expand Talent Pipelines

Where feasible, assess candidates based on skills and abilities, not academic qualifications or years of experience

Mine the workforce to find critical skills in unexpected places

RETAIL • RETAIL

## Costco's CEO started his career as a forklift driver. Now he's leading a \$254 billion giant rising up the Fortune 500



By Marco Quiroz-Gutierrez  
Reporter

June 4, 2025, 6:07 AM ET

[Add us on](#)



# Compensation and Benefits

Regular market surveys, total compensation, decompressed pay

- Design comp/benefits to respond to generational needs (e.g., provide new employees with immediate vacation and sick leave)
- Calculate and communicate total comp
- Regularly assess pay equity
- Provide hiring and retention bonuses
- Simplify classification systems



*“Our classification system was reformed to reduce 16 steps to 8. This can reduce the turnover of young employees. Research pointed out the importance of keeping a new employee for four years, which exponentially increased the odds they wouldn’t leave.”*

# HR Capability

**High-performing HR departments: staff members who have the right motivation, attitude, skills, education and experience**

- **Assess competencies and strengths of HR staff**
- **Fund and support training (e.g., soft skills, conflict resolution), certifications, cross-functional learning, staff rotations**
- **Provide onboarding that connects HR staff to mission and strategy**

*“Every member of HR, at one time or another, visits departments to help with HR questions and be the face of HR to other parts of the organization.”*

*“We’ve done a lot of customer service training.  
If we see something going wrong, we see what we can do.”*

# New Employee Onboarding



CREATING A LASTING

**impression**

A DEFINITIVE GUIDE  
FOR ONBOARDING  
NEW PUBLIC SECTOR  
EMPLOYEES



By Robert J. Lavigna, IPMA-CP  
Assistant Vice Chancellor & Director of Human Resources  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

# Why This Research Matters

- Groundbreaking empirical evidence that HR influences government's "bottom line"
  - HR not just a back-office operation
  - Bolsters the argument – to leaders – that the workforce is an asset to invest in, not simply a cost to be reduced or controlled
  - Identifies HR areas that positively impact residents and communities
- "The HR team is all about service and we provide that service to the employees so they feel cared for, and it flows from them to the residents"*

**“Tell me what you know, not what you think”**



**“If that’s just your opinion, it’s worth nothing”**

**Jana Ventura**  
**Human Resources Director**  
**City of Sachse**

# **Employee Wellbeing – A Deeper Dive**



# Framework of Employee Well-being

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INTENT

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STRUCTURE

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FEEDBACK

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MEASUREMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

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LEADERSHIP

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CULTURE

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EXPERIENCE

# Employee Wellness. It Matters.

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## INTENT

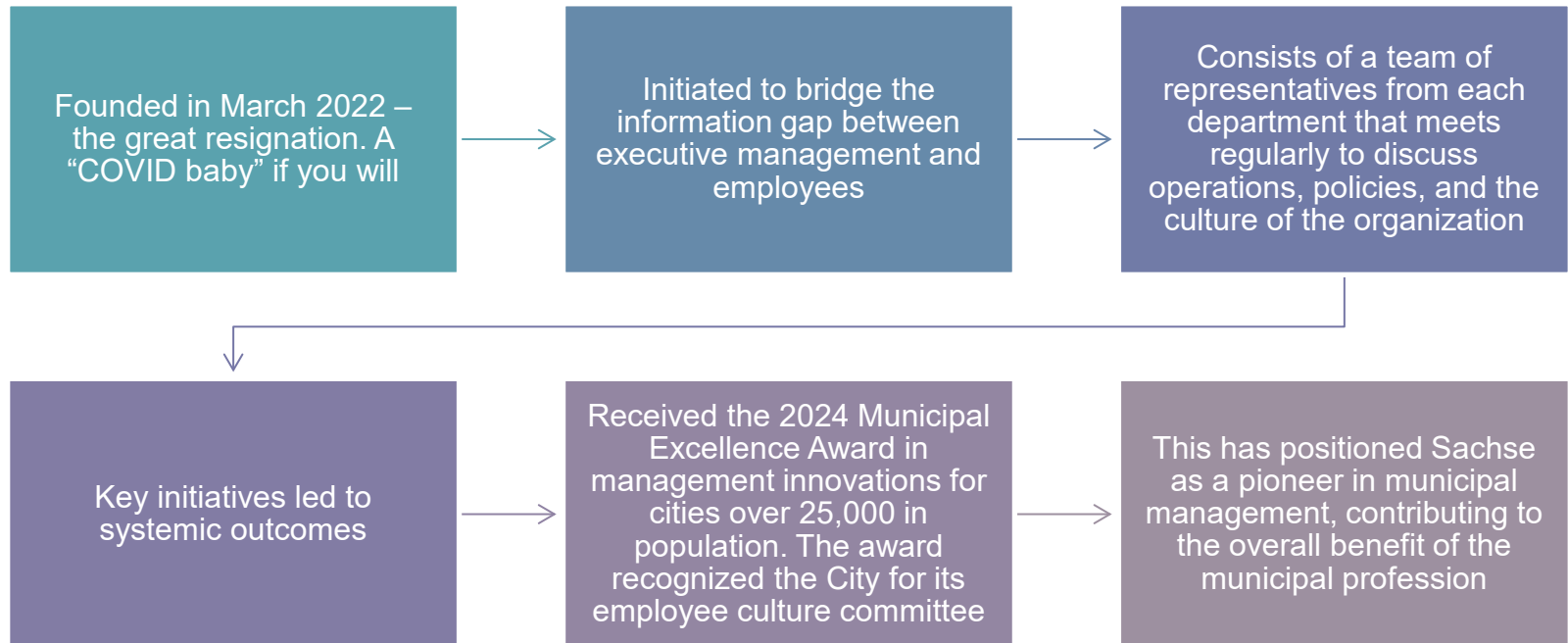
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- The employee experience → the community experience
  - It impacts resident perception of quality of municipal services
  - It influences trust in local government
- Wellness in the workplace isn't a perk. It's a strategy
- Intentionality is the difference between having a culture and designing one

“A boat doesn't go forward if each one is rowing their own way.”  
-*Swahili Proverb*

# Culture Committee

## STRUCTURE



## Culture Committee Outcomes

- Family Care Leave
- Two additional paid holidays
- Tuition reimbursement increase
- Lump sum paid time off
- Increased vacation time
- “Dress for your day” dress code
- Compressed work schedule
- Robust employee engagement events

# Stay Chats

## FEEDBACK



*"We can't fix it if we don't know about it."  
Gina Nash, City Manager*

## Stay Chats Secret Sauce

- Train Your Supervisors
  - Your supervisors must know how to receive feedback for this to be successful
  - Do...
    - Do be a mentor
    - Do assume best intentions
    - Do actively listen
    - Do ask questions
    - Do express gratitude
    - Do self-reflect
  - Don't...
    - Don't get defensive
    - Don't overpromise or over-identify
    - Don't be dismissive

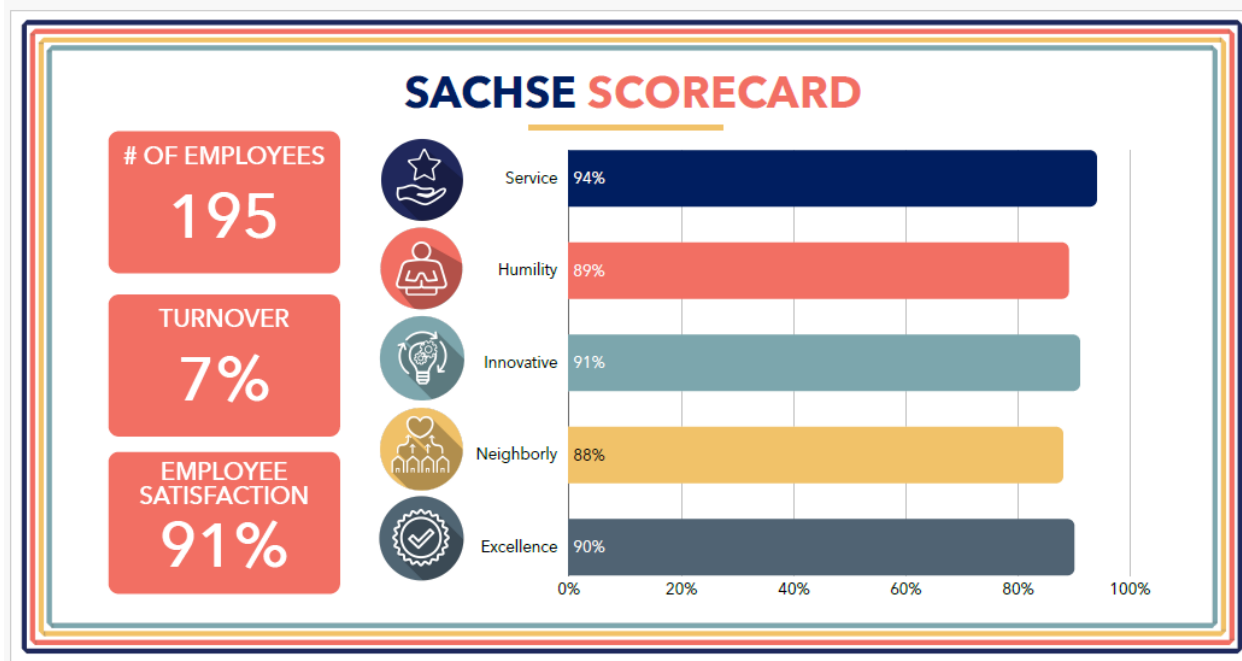
## Are You Ready For It?

Things to consider:

- Why are you conducting stay chats
  - Don't ask questions you're not ready to hear the answer to
  - Be transparent about intent
- Action and accountability
  - What are you going to do with the feedback?
  - One of the worst things you can do is ask, listen, and then do nothing
- Cultural Readiness
  - Is your culture open to honest conversations?
  - Work on building trust before implementing stay chats



# What Gets Measured Gets Done



# Sachse Scorecard

## MEASUREMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY



# Psychological Safety: Level Up Your Leadership

## LEADERSHIP

### Emotional Intelligence

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." *Viktor E. Frankl*

### Change your language

Extensive training relative to emotional intelligence and the enneagram  
Review personality profiles before having hard conversations  
Learn how to be effective with people who see the world differently than you  
Focus groups with struggling teams



**.... We spend a lot of time correcting behavior - but not enough time asking whether we ever taught it in the first place.**

- Employees are humans
- Our mantra is “treat people well while we have them.”
- When an issue arises, the first question is.....but do they have that tool in their toolkit?
- Generally, most people want to do the right thing
- It is easy to assume that the correct behavior or action is obvious – but maybe it’s not?
- Focus on building capability

# 360-degree Support

## CULTURE



### Employee Assistance Programs

Mental Health Counseling  
Financial Counseling  
Texas Blue Chip for Public Safety  
No cost and 100% confidential



### Employer Wellness Programs

Incentivize preventative exams using PTO and financial incentives



### Onsite Biometric Screening and Flu Shot Clinics

Make biometric screenings and annual flu shots an easy choice with an onsite, no cost options  
Participation earns wellness plan rewards



### Paid Family Care Leave

A family care paid leave program that provides a six-week paid leave benefit that is available immediately upon hire

This time can be used for maternity/paternity leave, caring for a family member as approved by the FMLA, miscarriage recovery/bereavement, and attending appointments for estate closure proceedings as power-of-attorney following the death of an immediate family member

# Financial Health

## CULTURE

### Education, education, education

- Onsite quarterly routine visits by our 457(b) rep
- Annual presentations during open enrollment

### Tuition Reimbursement

- \$5,250 annual tuition reimbursement

### Partnership with regional competency-based education program

- Texas A&M
- Online classes, 7-week terms
- Up to 84 credit hours towards bachelor's degree for verified and assessed on-the-job experience



# Sachse Core Values

## CULTURE

- Brought the concept to the Culture Committee in 2024 - after speaking with their respective departments, they brainstormed some early ideas
- Conducted an employee survey to solicit feedback on the Culture Committee proposed core values
- Respondents expressed a desire for the Core Values to be integrated into daily operations and to serve as guiding principles for behavior and decision-making, both internally and externally
- Many respondents noted that the Core Values reflect culture and values that the City has already built – “things we’re already doing” – but that defining them will provide accountability and benefit recruiting and professional development

“I believe that when you have a strong culture with shared values, employees are happier and ultimately more productive and successful.”  
*-Esther Weaver, employee*

## Core Values Rollout

- Performance evaluation integration
- Quarterly SHINE Award
- Peer nominated most Valuable Player (MVP) annual award
- Job descriptions and job postings
- Email signature blocks



### Service

We are dedicated to the service of the Sachse community.



### Humility

We serve our residents and our team with freedom from pride or arrogance.



### Innovative

We strive to turn our ideas into solutions that make us more efficient, responsive, and proactive.



### Neighborly

We lead with empathy and treat our residents and our team as our neighbors.



### Excellence

We strive for high standards in pursuit of exceeding community expectations.

# Bringing Core Values to Life

## CULTURE

Website | Employee  
Intranet

Employee spotlights and  
examples posted on  
social media and  
presented during City  
Manager update at City  
Council meetings

Spotlights in our  
monthly internal  
newsletter

Other marketing  
projects (posters,  
employee photos, etc.)

Annual refresh and re-  
introduction campaign

New employee  
onboarding integration

Department-led round  
robin Lunch & Learns

Community engagement  
through the SHINE  
award



# Department Led Education

## EXPERIENCE



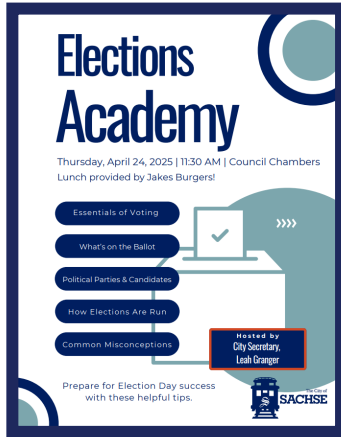
**FILLING BUCKETS**  
A CHAT ON PUBLIC WORKS

Thursday, June 26, 2025 | 11:30 A.M.  
City Hall Court Room

KFC Chicken will be served for lunch.

- Learn about on-going projects
- Learn what it takes to be a Public Works Employee
- See a jet truck demo!

SACHSE The City of



**Elections Academy**

Thursday, April 24, 2025 | 11:30 AM | Council Chambers  
Lunch provided by Jakes Burgers!

- Essentials of Voting
- What's on the Ballot
- Political Parties & Candidates
- How Elections Are Run
- Common Misconceptions

Hosted by  
City Secretary,  
Leah Granger

Prepare for Election Day success with these helpful tips.

SACHSE The City of



**SITES & SLICES** JOIN US!

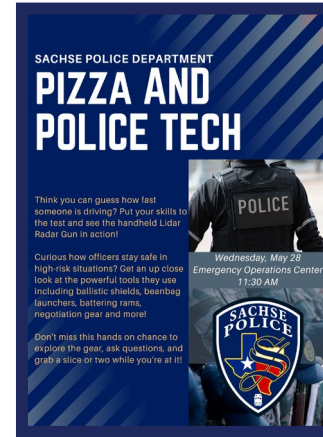
Join Sachse Economic Development and the President/CEO of Cane Rosso for a conversation on commercial site selection, and how Cane Rosso landed in Sachse.

Lunch provided by Cane Rosso!

Monday, July 21  
12 PM

City Hall - Courtroom

SACHSE The City of



**SACHSE POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**PIZZA AND POLICE TECH**

Think you can guess how fast someone is driving? Put your skills to the test and see the handheld Lidar Radar Gun in action!

Curious how officers stay safe in high-risk situations? Get an up close look at the powerful tools they use including ballistic shields, beanbag launchers, battering rams, negotiation gear and more!

Don't miss this hands on chance to explore the gear, ask questions, and grab a slice or two while you're at it!

Wednesday, May 28  
Emergency Operations Center  
11:30 AM

SACHSE POLICE



**SAK[SEE] YOURSELF IN COURT**

Behind every traffic ticket and local ordinance lies the Municipal Court where everyone lives their everyday life. Join us for a chance and learn to get an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at what happens in action.

Lunch provided by Jason's Deli

Wednesday, September 24  
12:00 PM  
City Hall Court Room

SACHSE The City of



# Key Takeaways

- **Effective HR practices drive resident satisfaction with government and quality of life**
- **The key practices**
  - **Performance management**
  - **Recruiting and hiring**
  - **Employee wellbeing**
  - **HR capability**
  - **Compensation and benefits**



# Data Drives Decision-Making

High-performing government organizations don't guess – they listen, measure, and act using credible, defensible data

## National Employee Survey (NES)

- Employee engagement and morale
- Trust in leadership and communication
- Workplace culture and belonging
- Job satisfaction, retention risk, and alignment
- Perceptions of fairness, equity, and growth opportunities



[info.polco.us](http://info.polco.us)

## National Community Survey (NCS)

- Standardized, benchmarked assessment – residents' opinions on broad range of topics (quality of life, community characteristics, governance, public engagement)
- Scientifically designed to yield representative, statistically valid insights
- Results benchmarked against hundreds of other communities

# For More Information



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**White Paper:**

***Building Better Government From  
Within: Workforce Excellence  
and Resident Satisfaction***



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