

## NH BUSINESS REVIEW: NH'S CHANGING WORKFORCE; ONLINE AARP TOOL SHINES A LIGHT ON WORKFORCE ISSUES

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In early spring, AARP launched the AARP Workforce Assessment Tool, an online survey designed to aid businesses in pursuing a proactive approach to addressing possible workforce issues posed by the growing number of employees nearing retirement age.

To date, more than a dozen businesses in New Hampshire and 400 across the country have taken advantage of the resource. In so doing, they have come to better understand the age demographics of their companies, the workforce challenges posed by these numbers and the steps their company can take to ensure their workforce needs will be met in the future.

“This tool shines a light for companies on what they are looking forward to when it comes to their workforce,” said Jamie Bulen, associate state director of communications for AARP NH. “The information they gather through completing this survey enables them to build some recommendations and implement the changes that will help them address their future workforce needs.”

Introduced as part of AARP’s national “50+ Worker Campaign,” the AARP Workforce Assessment Tool is one of a growing number of resources made available to employers across the country through AARP’s Web-based Employer Resource Center, [aarp.org/employerresourcecenter](http://aarp.org/employerresourcecenter).

Free and confidential, the 80-question online survey is the most hands-on aspect of the new campaign and takes less than an hour to complete. Questions cover employee demographics and projected hiring needs, workplace environment, recruitment, training and development, knowledge retention and other workplace practices.

A comprehensive report — including an assessment of the potential impact posed by the number of older workers employed by the company, an overview of current employer practices, a list of areas where improvements can be made, recommendations on how to address pending changes brought on by the current workforce, suggestions on how best to

maximize the experience of the company's older workforce and an inventory of workplace strengths — is delivered to the employer within 24 to 48 hours of submitting the survey.

To Linda Brenner, co-managing partner of InTalent Consulting LLC, a company specializing in human resource and talent management, the Workforce Assessment Tool provides employers with the information they need to address future workforce issues in a concise and easily understood manner. "It's unlike anything we've ever seen before," Brenner said. "It's a free, simple and easy way to get important information you can use." Pat Donahue, managing director of administration and human resources for the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority was among the first in New Hampshire to complete the Workforce Assessment Tool and was pleased to find the results confirmed that she and her organization were on the right track when it came to questions regarding the future of their workforce.

"We found this tool to fit well with the things we were looking to address like succession planning which is a big area of focus for us," said Donohue. "It validated many of the things we were talking about and motivated me to bring in some multigenerational training."

For Donahue, results from the Workforce Assessment Tool proved useful in highlighting the things NHHFA was doing well – a benefits package that supported 50+ workers, for example – as well as the areas in which improvements could be made.

According to Donahue, the graphs and charts included in the report put the data she supplied into a clear and concise package of information, making it easy to explain, understand and act upon. "This tool offers a product that looks at information in an objective way — a way that helps you focus on your goal and present it in a less threatening manner," she said.

For help in identifying the most beneficial changes and mapping out a course of action, Donahue turned to InTalent Consulting, which has agreed to lend its expertise to NHHFA in support of AARP's 50+ Workers Campaign. "We agreed to be a part of this because the very fact that AARP is out there talking about workforce demographics is so important," said Cindy Lubitz, co-managing partner of InTalent Consulting. "This tool presents an opportunity to take a look at the broader issues of workforce planning."

According to Lubitz, possible considerations for NHHFA might include the implementation of roundtable discussions, workshops and more literature on multigenerational workforces.

N.H.'s Changing Workforce series is a partnership between NHBR and AARP New Hampshire.

Article may be found at: <http://www.nhbr.com/people/382131-292/n.h.aopss-changing-workforce-online-aarptool-shines.html>