



Job fairs such as this one on April 6 in Marysville that attracted about 500 people is one way Caltrans seeks to replace retiring workers and prepare for an expanded workload from SB 1. Caltrans is hosting 10 of these events in 2018. For every five people hired by Caltrans in 2017, four retired.

Caltrans Building Up its Workforce

Recruiting Efforts Stepped Up to Meet SB 1 Demands, Offset Attrition

Grappling with an ongoing wave of retirements and increased demand for workers as a result of the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017 (Senate Bill 1), Caltrans is expanding efforts to recruit, train and retain employees.

Caltrans is staging more job recruitment events, ramping up outreach via social media and other means, creating more opportunities for existing employees to move up or transfer their knowledge in the Department, streamlining the job application process, and boosting mentoring and student assistant programs. These measures align with Caltrans' 2015-2020 Strategic Management Plan objectives for succession planning within the organization.

The overall workforce strategy is important because Caltrans values and seeks diversity, and realizes the importance of placing the right number of people with the right skills in jobs suited for them. And that's a challenge with more than 18,500 full-time, permanent employees spread out across the state.

Caltrans estimates that it needs to hire several thousand workers in the coming years. There were 1,383

people hired in fiscal year 2016-17 and 1,590 through March of fiscal year 2017-18. That hiring helped offset the number of people leaving Caltrans during those same periods, 877 in 2016-17 and 1,023 in 2017-18.

Surveyors, environmental planners, heavy equipment operators, and electricians are proving particularly difficult to recruit. Project designers, engineers, planners and maintenance workers in general also are being sought.

To replenish its ranks, Caltrans in 2017 began hosting career fairs where attendees got help navigating the state application process, then met with hiring managers of various divisions.

Between 600 and 1,000 people attended each event last year. They were so successful that Caltrans is hosting 10 of them in 2018.

It's part of an ambitious effort to address the current tide of retirements, and those expected over the next five years. About 54 percent of the Caltrans workforce is age 50 or older. Of those workers, nearly 67 percent are managers and supervisors.

Compared with Caltrans, the State workforce skews considerably younger. Statistics show that 38.5 percent of State workers are age 50 and above.

Millennials — those persons born roughly between 1982 and 1997, with the oldest being 36 — make up just 14.5 percent of Caltrans’ employees. In contrast, about 37 percent of the U.S. workforce and 23.1 percent of all State workers are in the millennial age bracket.

SB 1, projected to provide Caltrans about \$1.8 billion annually for transportation system repairs and improvements, will add to the workload in the coming years. When SB 1 was signed by Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. in May 2017, Caltrans was at its lowest level of staffing in a decade.

Caltrans also is making a strong effort to retain the institutional knowledge of its experienced staff before they retire. The Department is updating a [“Knowledge Transfer Guidebook”](#) that outlines ways to help with

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succession planning within the organization. Those include cross-training, job shadowing and job rotations.

Already, the wave of retirements is cresting. For every five employees hired, four are retiring, according to Caltrans statistics. Bearing out that trend, more than 700 people retired from the Department in 2017. **MM**

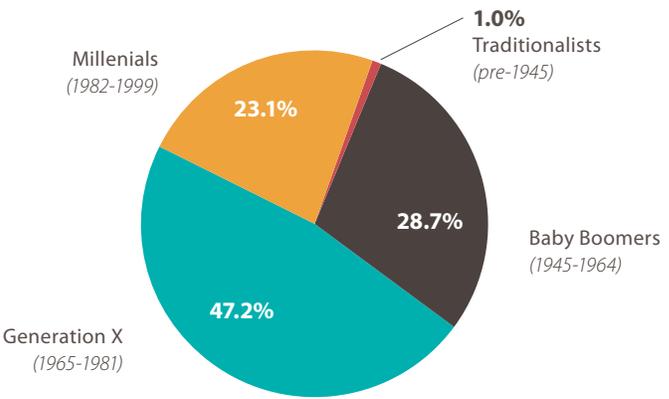
Sources: Jason Solis, Caltrans Office Chief, Workforce Planning, Recruitment, and Employee Engagement; Christina Hisamoto, Recruitment Manager; Harriet Simpson, Workforce Planning and Employee Recognition Program



Caltrans photo by Scott Lorenzo

Encouraging students such as Lewis Duah to become student assistants or volunteers at Caltrans is an effective recruiting tool.

State of California Workforce by Generation



Caltrans photo by Scott Lorenzo

Jay Saefong gains valuable work experience, and Caltrans gains access to talented recruits through a student assistant program.



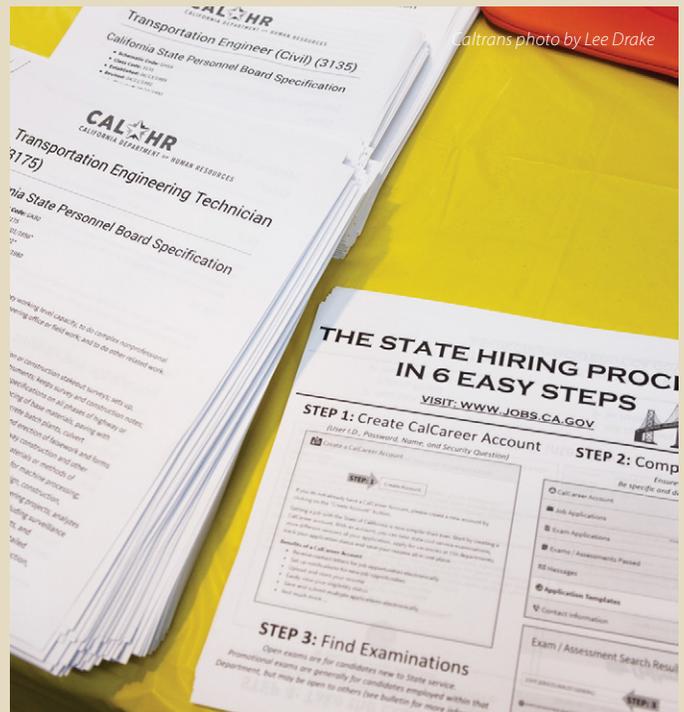
Caltrans photo by Lee Drake

Job fairs such as this one in Marysville are an effective way to recruit employees, but Caltrans, trying to cope with a surge in retirements and new work from SB 1, is going beyond by streamlining the hiring process and participating in a pilot project using professional networking site LinkedIn.

Recruiters Widen Approach to Find, Keep Workers

Caltrans has launched a series of recruitment efforts to bolster its workforce. They include:

- More than doubling the number of recruitment events attended by Caltrans representatives, from 30 to 65 last year. Those included job fairs at universities, and partnering with county probation officers, refugee centers and other agencies.
- A pilot project using the LinkedIn professional networking site to recruit for candidates with specialized skills. The state Department of Public Health, Department of General Services, and Department of State Hospitals also are participating.
- A collaboration with the California Department of Human Resources to consolidate outdated classifications, which reduces the number of exams that job candidates must take. The State's Department of Technology underwent the first consolidation, with the number of classifications dropping from 36 to nine, affecting about 10,000 workers. It's hoped the modernized system will benefit workers already in civil service IT positions, and the State, which will be in better position to attract and keep employees with vital technical skills.
- Greater participation in student assistant and volunteer programs. For example, the number of student assistants working at Caltrans has tripled over the last three years.
- Visiting college campuses and interviewing job candidates on the spot. Three such events were recently held at California State University in Fresno and Sacramento, and Cal Poly, Pomona. There were 490 applicants in total. As of June 5, 157 conditional job offers were extended, with more likely.
- Expanding Caltrans' mentorship programs. Started in 2015, about 500 people have participated to date. The goal is to expand employee skill sets and provide opportunities that could lead to advancement.
- Ongoing promotion of job fairs and other events through social media and other means.
- Participating in job fairs and other programs offered by local governments in places such as the San Francisco Bay Area, where the high cost of living makes it more difficult to recruit some positions.



Caltrans photo by Lee Drake

Efforts are being made to demystify the state hiring process that can be confusing for those unfamiliar with civil service requirements.