



2024 Fall Conference at The Ashore Resort
Ocean City, Maryland

CONSULTANT ON-SITE STAFFING FOR PUBLIC AGENCIES

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ABSTRACT

Consultant On-Site Staffing for Public Agencies

This presentation will address the practice of public agencies contracting with local consulting firms to utilize their staff to supplement the agency's workforce to meet the demands of the workload. The presentation will specifically address staff augmentation by public agencies (e.g.

Department of Public Works) that support local infrastructure design and construction requiring civil engineers, designers, or technicians.

We will discuss the advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of the public agency, the consulting firm and the consulting staff.

1.0 PDH

BIOGRAPHY

❖ Kathy Walsh, PE

- Over 30 years of experience in transportation engineering
- Current position: on-site staff at MD SHA District 3

❖ Robert Stewart, PE, PTOE

- Over 9 years of experience in Traffic Engineering
- Current position: on-site staff at MD SHA District 3

❖ Michael Paylor, PE, PTOE

- Over 33 years of experience in Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering and Operations
- Currently Division Chief for Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation



Outline

- Shortage of Civil Engineers and Designers
- Public Agency Advantages and Disadvantages
- Consulting Firm Advantages and Disadvantages
- Consulting Firm – Choose the Right Person
- Staff – Pros and Cons
- Contracting
- By the Numbers
- Experience of Counties Using Consultant Staffing



Terms and Definitions

TERM	TYPE	REQUIREMENTS
On-Site (In-House) Staff Augmentation	Temporary Hire – follows on-site or hybrid work requirements of public agency	Term ends with consulting firm’s contract; all equipment needed is supplied by the hiring agency and office space is provided.
Off-Site Staff Augmentation	Temporary Hire – work is off site at the home office or remote office	Term ends with consulting firm’s contract; All equipment needed is supplied by the consulting firm.
Project Based Staff Augmentation	Temporary hire for a specific project and time period using staff with specialized skills	Terms of contract will determine if it is on-site or remote work and ends with completion of the project.
Team Based Staff Augmentation	Temporary hire of an entire team; often in the form of managing a task or project until complete	Contract ends with completion of the project or task; similar to a GEC team.

Shortage of Engineers and Technical Staff

Increase in Demand for Technical Staffing

- Retirement from the workforce / Covid
- Aging Infrastructure
- Increase in new development; residential and commercial
- Increased Federal Funding for Construction Projects

In November 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act authorized over **\$1.2 trillion** for rebuilding and renovating America's infrastructure. Combined with other COVID-era relief packages, trillions of dollars are now flowing to transform and repair our region's roads, bridges, buses, and trains.

Shortage of Engineers and Technical Staff

Increase in Demand for Technical Staffing



U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/architecture-and-engineering/civil-...>

Civil Engineers - U.S. Bureau of Labor...

Employment of civil engineers is projected to grow 6 percent from 2023 to 2033, faster than the average for all occupations. **About 22,900** openings for civil engineers are projected each year, on average

Shortage of Engineers and Technical Staff

CAREER	BASE EMPLOYMENT	PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT	% INCREASE	REPLACEMENT	OPENINGS
Civil Engineers	5,484	5,989	9.21%	3,355	3,860
Environmental Scientists	2,315	2,591	11.92%	1,903	2,179
Engineers, Others	6,856	7,260	5.89%	3,991	4,395
Construction Managers	9,846	10,760	9.28%	7,250	8,164
Surveying/ Mapping Tech	902	975	8.09%	1,089	1,162
Surveyors	1,660	1,813	9.22%	1,084	1,237
Urban / Regional Planners	799	871	9.01%	649	721

10-Year Projection for Engineers / Designers / Technical Fields

Shortage of Engineers and Technical Staff

Decrease in Available Skilled Workforce

- Fewer people entering the workforce





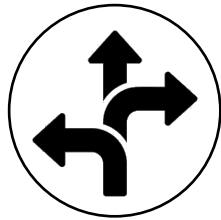
Shortage of Engineers and Technical Staff

Decrease in Available Skilled Workforce

- **Civil Engineering – Education / Degree**
- **Fewer Students pursue Civil Engineering**
 - Not encouraged
 - More lucrative fields of work
 - Entering Mechanical / Electrical fields of study

Public Agencies and Consultant Staffing

Advantages of Utilizing Consultant Staff



Flexibility and Scalability



Specialized Expertise / Experience

Public Agencies and Consultant Staffing

Advantages of Utilizing Consultant Staff



Cost Savings

Salary

Staff benefits

Tax expenses

Social security

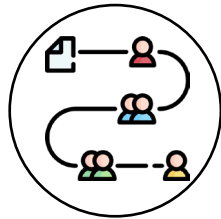
Parking or commuter benefit

Health insurance

Retirement benefits

Public Agencies and Consultant Staffing

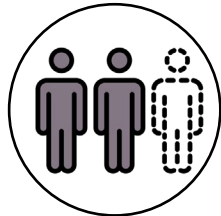
Advantages of Utilizing Consultant Staff



Avoiding Bureaucracy



Outside Perspective



Difficult to hire staff / shortage of qualified applicants



Public Agencies and Consultant Staffing

Disadvantages of Utilizing Consultant Staff

- Over-reliance of consultants – knowledge lost once they leave
- Higher costs
- Short term staffing
- Loss of investment in development
- Trade-offs – right mix of consultants and full-time staff
- Developing team comradery, differing expectations, benefits, relationships

Consulting Firm Point of View

Advantages to Sending Staff

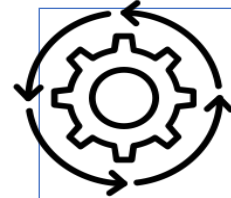


Develop relationships

Gain agency perspective

Provide valuable information
(processes & procedures)

Consulting Firm Point of View



Utilization

Advantages to Sending Staff



Reflect the quality & talent of your firm



Increase chance of additional contracts



Consulting Firm Point of View

Disadvantages to Supply Staff

On-site staff may be removed at any time / short notice

Staff may be unsatisfied – leave consultant

Staff may join the Agency – leave consultant



Consulting Firm Point of View

Disadvantages to Supply Staff

Workload challenges

Available Contract Budget

Meet commitment for MBE goal



Choosing Staff to Fit the Position

Who to Send?

- Currently not working on a complicated, fast-paced project
- Will not be severely detrimental to completing the workload (short term)
- Consider hiring someone to fill the on-site role
- Presents the right demeanor

Choosing Staff to Fit the Position

Who to Send?

- One that can quickly pick up new procedures and tasks
- Will not be a hardship to travel to an agency's office location
- Provides clean, clear, and quality work



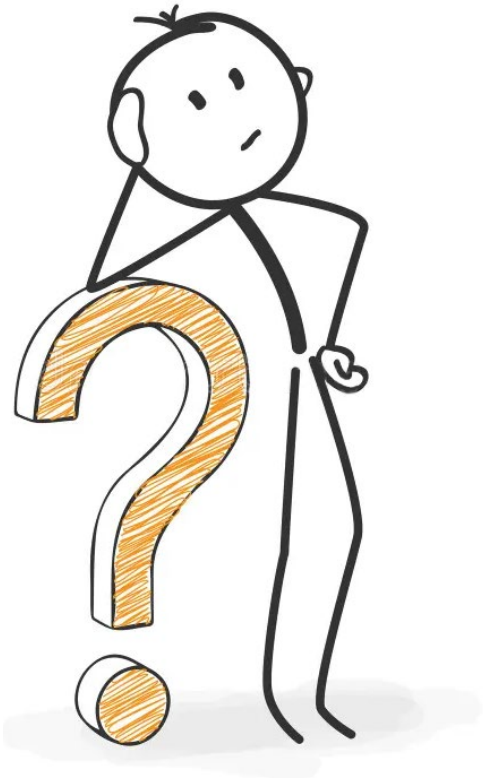
Staff – Pros and Cons

Will it be a Good Move for Me?

- Broaden their understanding of the agencies challenges to procuring and completing projects
- Supplement and enhance their skillset and knowledge
- Exposed to many people in the industry
- Meet new office people and develop a new network of friends / work relationships
- May enjoy the change of office environment
- May have a better / easier commute to the agency's office
- More management / less engineering



Staff – Pros and Cons



Will it be a Good Move for Me?

- Miss out on resume building
- Lose touch with office staff
- Not quite the same rapport with Agency staff
- Certain tasks are off-limits
- Not improving on certain technical skills

Contracting

How are on-site consultants procured?

- Agencies prepare the RFP packages
- Open-ended contracts and on-site specific contracts
 - On-site consultants are one potential assignment
 - Agencies review on-site staff resumes
 - Consultant firm prepares task proposal for assignment
- Assignments are typically for 6-month or 12-month periods





Contracting

Managing On-site Consultants

- Track the on-site consultant workforce and keep records of:
 - Anticipated start/end dates
 - Justification for assignment
 - Completion of agency training
- Ensure task renewals are completed in a timely manner
- Re-evaluate the need at the end of a task cycle
- Monitor contract expenditures and burn rates



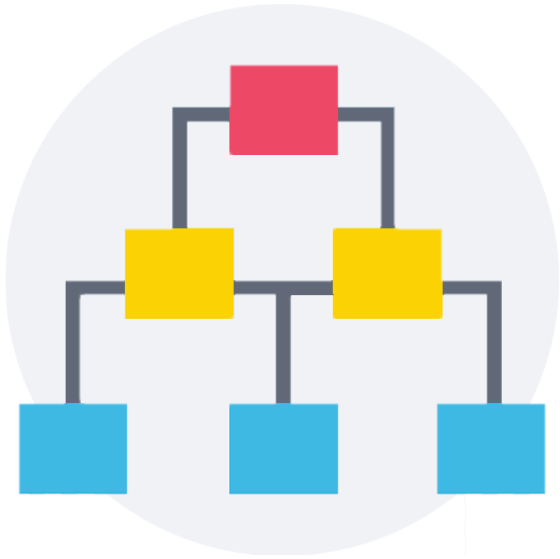
Contracting



Legal Compliance

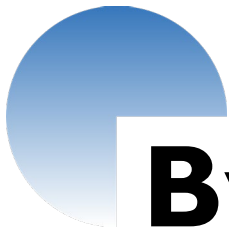
- Navigating the legal complexities of staff augmentation
- Preparing contracts that clearly outline the terms of engagement, confidentiality agreements, and compliance with relevant laws
- Be mindful of potential conflicts of interest
- Some responsibilities cannot be handled by on-site consultants

By the Numbers



How does SHA District 3 use on-site consultant staff?

- Breakdown on-site consultant staffing :
Traffic, Engineering Systems, Utilities, Maintenance, and Construction
- Explain the responsibilities
- Compare the % of workforce
- Discuss the difference in usage



By the Numbers

Traffic

Division Summary:

Respond to citizen/interagency/elected official requests, plan review, evaluate safety concerns, perform traffic engineering studies

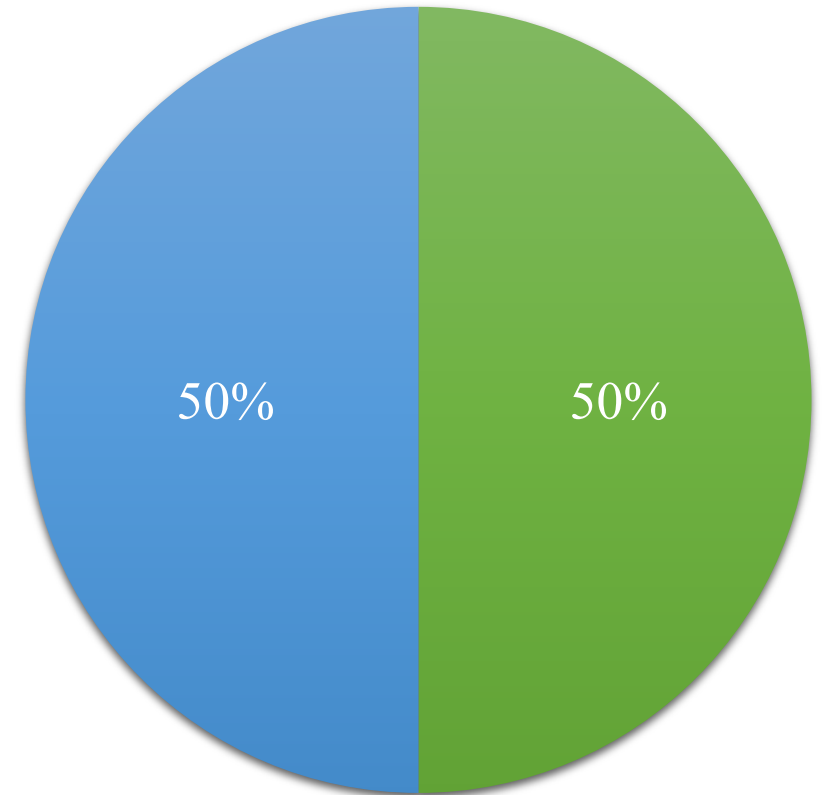
Staff Breakdown:

Approximately 50% of staff

Usage:

Manage large-scale or specialized projects and studies, supplement existing staff, temporarily shoring up a hole in staff, off-site consultants

Staff Breakdown



■ On-site Consultants
■ Full-time Staff

By the Numbers

Engineering Systems

Division Summary:

Prepare highway construction advertisements for system preservation or safety improvements, review customer requests, review design for access management

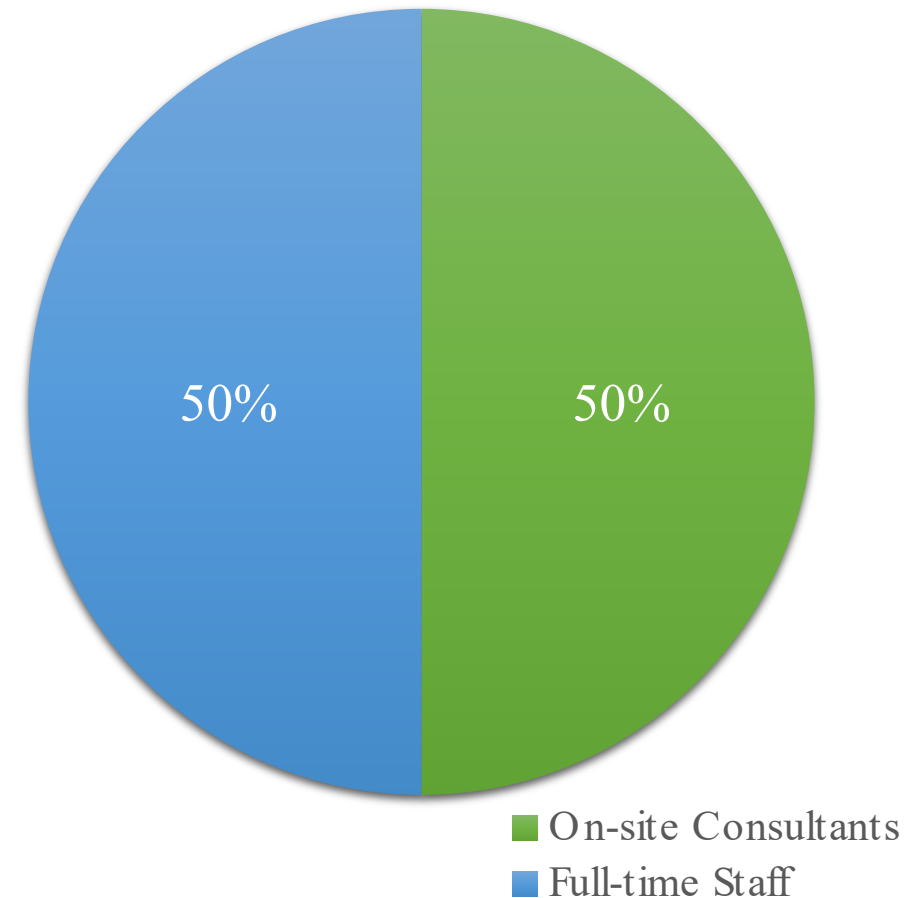
Staff Breakdown:

Approximately 50% of staff

Usage:

Manage large-scale or specialized projects, supplement existing staff

Staff Breakdown



By the Numbers

Utilities

Division Summary:

Review utility designs, inspect access permits, issue utility and lane closure permits, act as utility liaison for projects

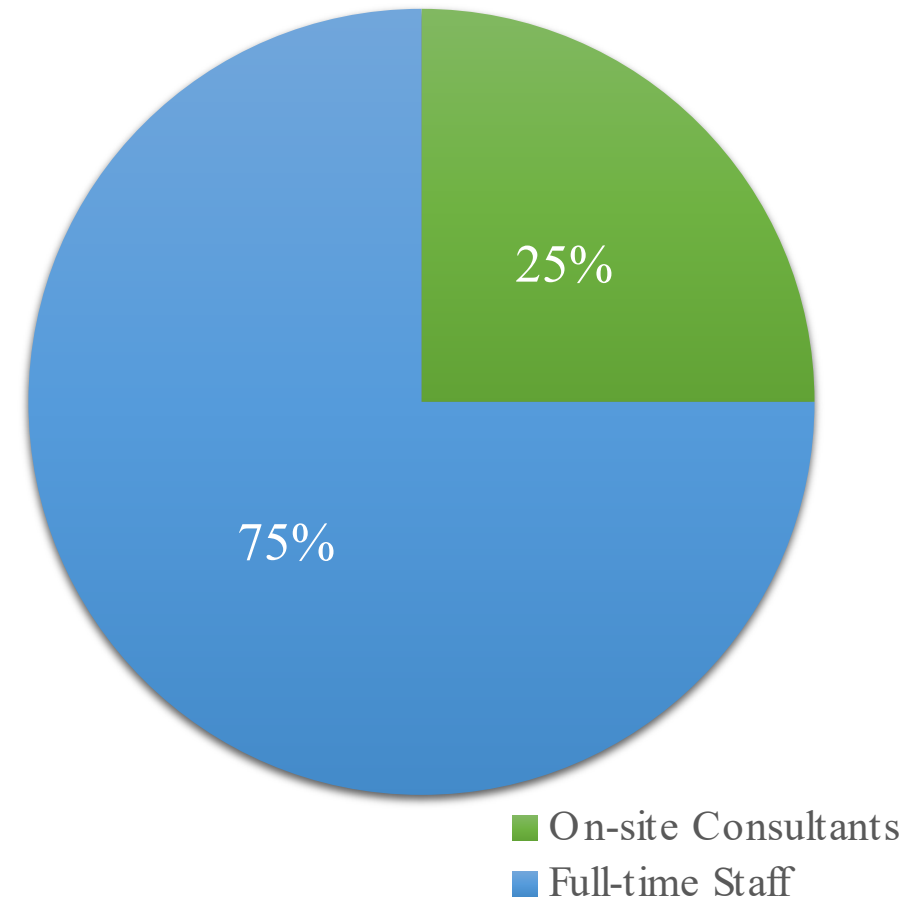
Staff Breakdown:

Approximately 25% of staff

Usage:

Project based augmentation, supplement existing staff, unique role

Staff Breakdown



By the Numbers

Maintenance

Division Summary:

Coordinate various maintenance activities including: SPM installation/repair, barrier repairs, mowing/trimming, snow removal, litter removal

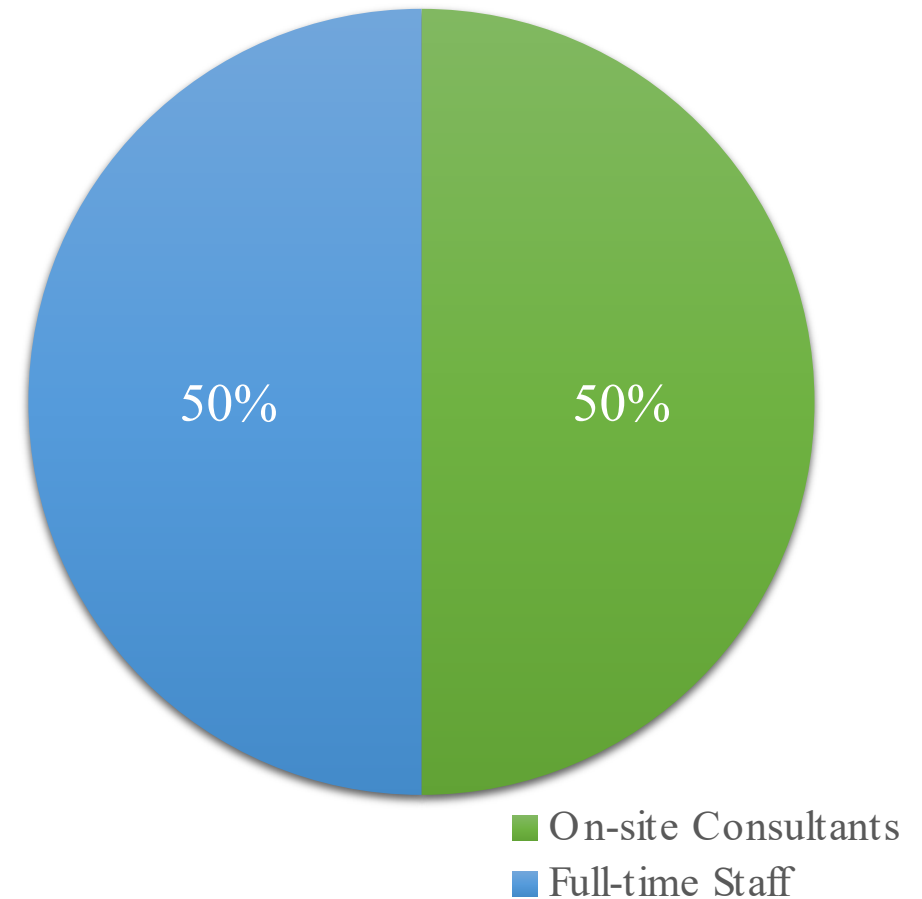
Staff Breakdown:

Approximately 50% of staff

Usage:

Program management, supplement existing staff

Staff Breakdown



By the Numbers

Construction

Division Summary:

Manage District construction projects, supervise the inspection of all work completed and materials used, monitor every detail of projects

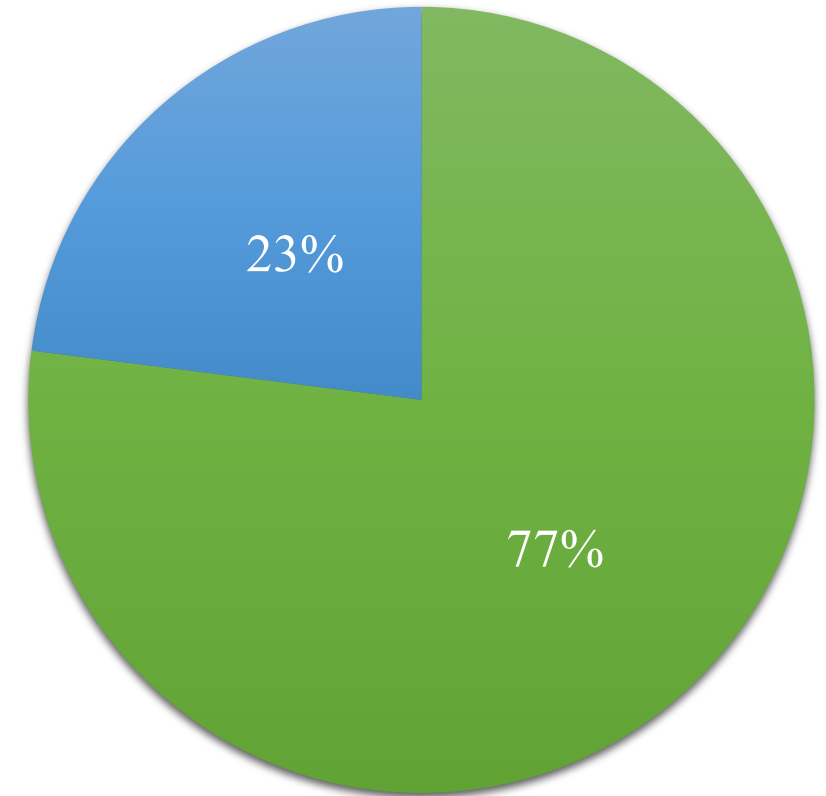
Staff Breakdown:

Approximately 77% of staff

Usage:

Supplement existing staffing

Staff Breakdown

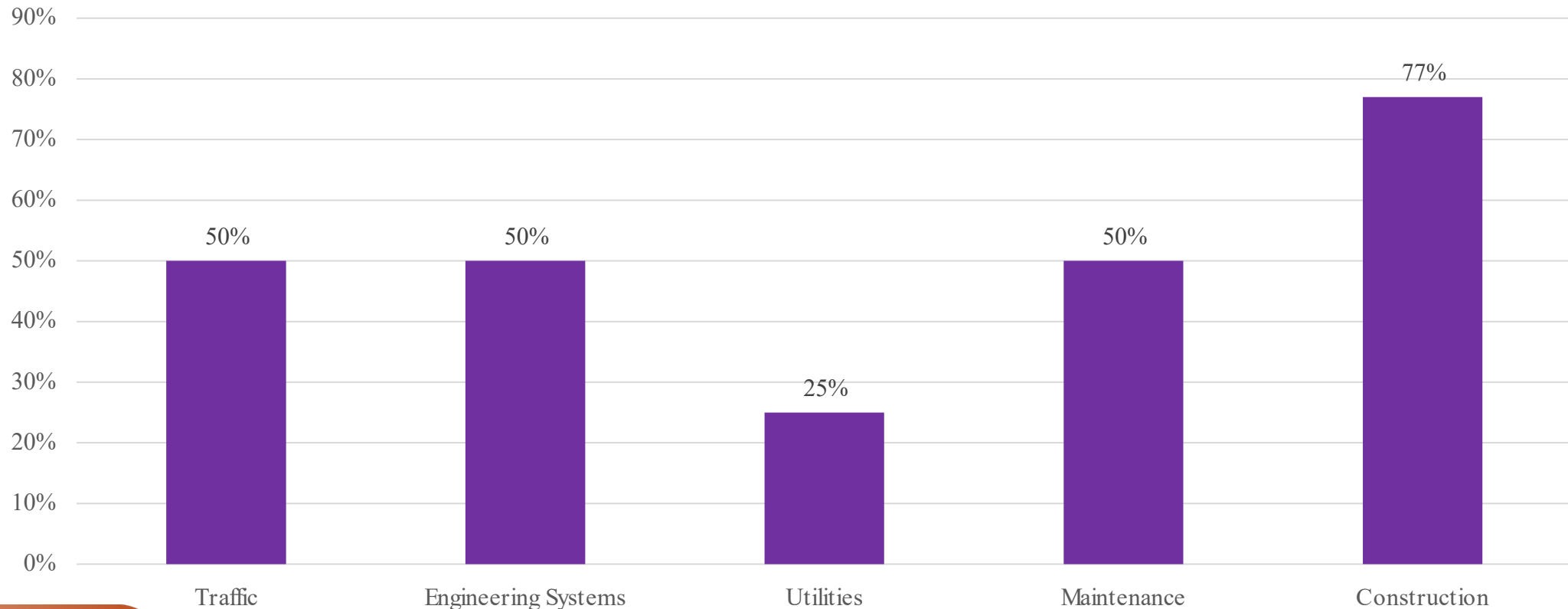


■ On-site Consultants
■ Full-time Staff

By the Numbers


District 3 Comparison of Divisions

On-site Consultant Breakdown - % of Workforce





County Perspective

1. Why does your public agency utilize consultants for on-site staff positions?
 2. Do you utilize on-site staff only until you can fill the position with a full time County employee?
 3. What are the benefits of consultants as on-site employees?
 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of having consultants as on-site staff?
 5. What are the disadvantages of having consultants as on-site employees?
 6. What conflicts might arise between consultant staff and county employee staff?
 7. What type of information do you block from consultant staff?
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Audience Perspective / Questions

1. Why does your public agency utilize consultants for on-site staff positions?
2. Do you utilize on-site staff only until you can fill the position with a full time County employee?
3. What are the benefits of consultants as on-site employees?
4. What are the disadvantages of having consultants as on-site employees?
5. What conflicts might arise between consultant staff and county employee staff?
6. What type of information do you block from consultant staff?
7. **Lessons Learned**

QUESTIONS?

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