

Work Planning

2025 End of Year Summary



Background:

In 2025, Human Resources Organizational Development (HR-OD) continued training on work planning. **Twenty-two agencies have now completed this training in the past four years.** Remaining ten agencies are assigned with the goal to train the final cohort in 2027.

Organizational Challenges to Address:

After four years of implementation, the top five **critical issues that would be helpful to resolve in the long term include:**

1. Planning and reacting to council/elected government
2. Planning and reacting to adhococracy
3. Inter-agency relationships and collaborations for project purposes
4. Staffing; turnover and lack of redundancy
5. Planning and strategic difficulty due to the budget process

These items were identified by top organizational leaders participating in the work planning training as constraints that keep them from getting their work plan goals complete on time. Staff did not have knowledge from prior years insights until after they identified their own themes.

Organizational Development is committed to working with leadership citywide to find meaningful paths forward to address the known challenges that could support the work planning practices in the future.

2024 Round Three Work-Planning Cohort Check-Ins:

With our third-party consultant, Boldly & CO., HR-OD wrapped quarter one check-ins with **six agencies trained in late 2024**, including Civil Rights, Fleet, Independent Police Monitor, Monona Terrace, Streets & Urban Forestry, and Mayor's Sustainability Office.

Our work together in quarter one ensures agencies are:

1. Communicating their top agency goals with those who stand to be impacted
2. Developing check-in mechanisms to ensure accountability and progress throughout the year
3. Planning for the following quarter(s)

After the first quarter, agencies self-sustain the work planning process for the rest of the year. A survey from round-three cohort participants indicated training provided “a better common understanding of how to manage the work planning process internally” with room to improve. Teams were able to “agree to some accountability changes to help keep internal work teams

focused as needed.” One third of these agencies struggled and did not report progress due to staffing challenges faced throughout the year.

Round Four Work-Planning Cohort:

In December 2025, **six new agencies** completed the workshop. This included the entire Department of Planning, Community, and Economic Development which contains six Divisions including Office of the Director, Building Inspection, Community Development Authority – Housing, Community Development, Economic Development, and Planning. Attendees left with an action plan and Quarter 1 goals for 2026. Each agency will check in with HR-OD in Quarter 1.

Impacts:

Fourteen agencies that completed the workshop prior to 2025 provided follow-up evaluation data. **Lessons learned** indicate:

- The routine of **goal setting** and work planning **discussions** are **lasting benefits** from training and annual impact evaluation.
- Practices to **check in on work plan goals** vary by agency.
- Some **check on action items weekly** while others check **quarterly** on the full work plan.
- Several cited **losing discipline** shortly after completing training and follow up consultation.

Evaluation data tells us that agencies set anywhere from **two to 10(+)** goals with an average of 8 set in 2025. We saw an **overall 81% goal completion rate**, 1% higher than prior year. Data suggests agencies are setting slightly fewer, broader goals than years prior. Several noted increasing the number of milestones set to track progress toward larger goals. Agencies unable to complete all goals cited top constraints involving staffing capacity and priority changes adding unanticipated new projects. Retirements, other turnover, and onboarding new staff often distract from timely goal completion. Agencies with outstanding goals indicated intent to carry forward incomplete milestones into 2026 planning.

Learn More about Work Planning

Connect with our Performance Excellence Specialist, at OrganizationalDevelopment@cityofmadison.com to learn more or get involved.