

## Guidelines

<b>Title:</b>	Manager Tool: Appreciative Inquiry Exercise for Managers and Teams
<b>Related to:</b>	OHA 010-023
<b>Effective date:</b>	02/01/2021

## Purpose

This tool is not intended to be used as a stand-alone tool. The "Appreciative Inquiry exercise for managers and teams" complements the Flexible Work Solutions policy and associated tool, "Establishing flexible work options and updating position descriptions". This set of exercise guidelines are intended to support managers in establishing individual and team plans and to allow managers to update position descriptions for remote work. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strength-based capacity building approach that helps organizations and systems within organizations implement change processes.

## Guidelines

1. Before beginning the AI exercises found in the following steps, managers should review this short article: [Appreciative Inquiry](#).
2. Appreciative Inquiry begins with the assumption that every system and organization have strengths because the people who make that system have strengths.
3. The goal of the exercises in this tool are to help managers and teams focus on individual and team strengths to:
  - a. Build individual and team plans to meet unit and agency goals.
  - b. Determine whether team members can work remotely 100 percent of the time or if some on-site work time is required.
4. The art of appreciation and curiosity is central to the AI process. Managers should enter this exercise prepared to place value on the factors that give life to OHA. This will be achieved by:
  - a. Interviewing employees to find the best of the past or current state in the agency.
  - b. Facilitating employee storytelling and dreaming about the future state of the individual, the unit and the agency.
  - c. Recognizing that some responses may be based in equity or cultural issues. Managers should be prepared to adapt their responses to support improved outcomes and resolution of these issues.
5. AI is collaborative at every stage. Teams coming together to discover and dream create the strongest, most valued work for the agency. Managers engaging in the AI exercise are encouraging collaboration and dreaming to create best outcomes for the individuals, the team and the agency.
6. AI is inclusive. AI is about widening the circle of voices informing transformation. If other agency teams have a particular impact on one another, consider joint exercises to increase the synergy between plans.

7. AI is generative and dependent on the everyday conversations that happen between people.
  - a. Managers should be prepared to invest time in everyday conversations with their team members and to encourage those conversations between team members and others.
  - b. Broadening who works together results in a future state that is more desirable and achievable.
8. Use the following AI exercise to update position descriptions with the purpose of gaining a better understanding from staff about:
  - a. What is needed to foster staff engagement and connection.
  - b. How to optimize collaboration in a remote setting.
  - c. How to adjust to more flexible work environment.
9. Use the information gained in the exercise to:
  - a. Determine staffing needs across the program.
  - b. Provide context to the conversation related to updating individual position descriptions with remote work capabilities and technical needs.
  - c. Determine how to successfully support staff in a remote work environment.
10. Prior to engaging in individual conversations undertake the following team exercise:
  - a. In a group setting, the manager and all the members of the team should take five minutes for self-reflection. To begin, think of a high point in the past six months when you were proud of your work.
    - A. What was the project, task or experience you were proud of? Write down the key attributes that made the experience so memorable.
    - B. What made this positive experience possible?
    - C. Where were you?
    - D. What resources were available to help you complete the work.
  - b. In pairs, each person shares their story in about one minute. The pairs write down the common attributes of their successes.
  - c. Return to the group and share the list of attributes.
  - d. Discuss the following questions to identify strengths and themes to carry forward as a team:
    - A. How will we know we are successful as a team, regardless of where we work?
    - B. In our future state, what are we doing differently or the same?
    - C. How are we supporting each other and working together?
    - D. How are we being supported by our manager and our team?
11. The exercise in item nine should inform manager's staffing plan by providing a better understanding of the team's ability to support the work of the program.
12. Use the staffing plan to map individual position descriptions.
13. In one-to-one conversation with employees about their position descriptions use the staffing plan through the lens of the OHA Flexible Work Solutions policy to update sections four through 10 of the PD. This conversation will help inform the performance review as well.
  - a. OHA is committed to optimizing flexible work solutions, including remote work options, where appropriate.
  - b. Since business need likely won't change in individual PD's managers should consider the strengths individuals bring to their roles.
  - c. Consider the need for manager and IT support as the agency moves to one device and remote workers have to become more reliant on themselves in a remote setting.
14. Questions for one-to-one conversations fall into two categories:

- a. Inquire.
    - A. What excites you about your current job?
    - B. What is going well in the remote environment?
    - C. What have you learned about yourself working in a remote environment?
    - D. What strengths and characteristics do you rely on to help you do your job every day?
    - E. Where have you experienced growth?
    - F. What do you need from me (the manager) to be successful?
  - b. Inspire.
    - A. Two years now, what does your job look like?
    - B. What is the work you are doing?
    - C. Would you be working from home all of the time, some of the time, or none of the time?
    - D. How does the workplace you imagine look different from what you're currently experiencing?
    - E. What tools and equipment are you using to collaborate with internal and external partners and to complete your day-to-day tasks?
    - F. How is your manager supporting you in achieving your personal and professional goals?
15. Use the power of AI – capitalizing on individual strengths – to build good to great.
16. If there are performance concerns, or the strength-based process isn't working with a particular employee, consider a different approach or consult with Human Resources.
17. Other questions that can be considered for the group or individual process:
- a. Please share your role in OHA and what gets you excited about your work each morning.
  - b. What was the best virtual or remote experience you've had in the past year?
  - c. Assuming OHA will continue to evolve and adapt to a new physical work environment, what are the best features that exist today that we would want to build on and keep as we continue to advance?
  - d. Imagine the future. What would it look like and feel like if everyone in OHA has a positive and supportive virtual or remote work experience?
    - A. What are managers doing each day to support staff in achieving their work outcomes, providing deliverables, and meeting their professional goals?
    - B. What is it like checking in virtually with staff?
    - C. What do you see or hear on chat and in meetings?
18. For articles, links and additional resources related to Appreciative Inquiry, see "Best Practices for Supporting Flexible Work Solutions" found in the References section of this Guidelines document.

## References

OHA 010-023-01 Key Topics Related to Flexible Work Solutions, including Eligibility, Equipment and Reimbursement

[OHA 010-023-02 Updating Workday: Registering for Remote Work and Accessing Flexible Work Solutions](#)

[OHA 010-023-03 Updating Workday: Reviewing, Changing or Removing Remote Work Status, Updating Asset Lists](#)

OHA 010-023-04 Setting up the Home Office

OHA 010-023-05 Evaluating and Updating the Position Description for Flexible Work Solutions

OHA 010-023-06 Manager Tool: Appreciative Inquiry Exercise for Evaluating and Updating Position Descriptions for Flexible Work Solutions

OHA 010-023-07 Manager Tool: Best Practices for Supporting Flexible Work Solutions

OHA 010-023-08 OHA Remote Work Guide

OHA 010-023-09 Manager Tool: Working in a Different State – Topics to Consider

ODHS|OHA 010-023-10 Getting the Most Out of Your Home Network

## Forms referenced

## Related policies

[OHA 010-023 Flexible Work Solutions Policy](#)

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## Keywords

Alternate, activities, alternate schedule, appreciative inquiry, asset survey, chair, collaboration, collaborative, collective bargaining agreements, computer, contract, desk, engagement, ergonomic, equipment, facilities, flex, flexible, flexible work solutions, flexibility, flex time, FWS, home, home office, interaction, keyboard, manage, managers, meetings, mouse, office, PD, position description, printer, remote, remote access, safety, schedule, status, support, telecommute, telecommuting, telework, teleworking, virtual, WFH, work, Workday, work from home, work life balance, working remotely, workplace, workspace

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