AVIATION WORKFORCE & CULTURE FORUM

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GUIDEBOOK

Key Findings, Airport Practices, and What's Next

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WE HAVE A WORKFORCE CHALLENGE.

19,500,000,000

- Global air travel demand is increasing: **2042 expected to double that of 2024 passenger volumes**
- This requires a stronger, more sustainable aviation workforce



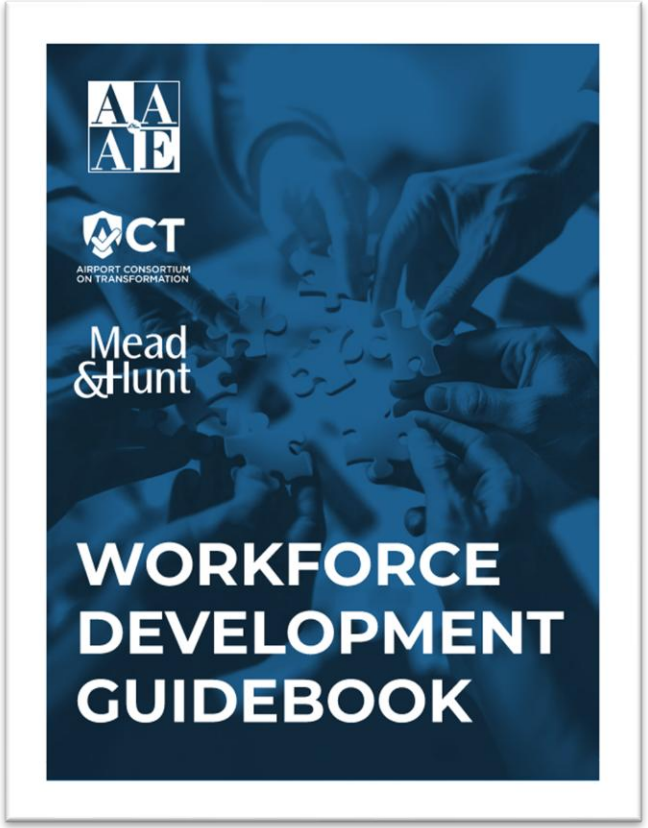
WHY ACT UNDERTOOK THIS WORK

- Focus on small, non-hub, and GA airports
- Limited staffing, funding, and geographic access to talent
- Builds on ICAO and ACI-NA workforce research



FROM REACTIVE HIRING TO WORKFORCE STRATEGY

- **Recruit** intentionally.
- **Develop** continuously.
- **Retain** effectively.
- **Plan** for future needs.





ACT Workforce Development Guidebook

SETTING THE STAGE



- Desktop research and literature review
- Existing aviation and workforce studies
- Cross-industry workforce practices

WHAT THE BACKGROUND RESEARCH TOLD US

- Workforce constraints extend beyond recruitment
- Smaller airports often lack dedicated workforce capacity
- Talent pipelines, employee development, retention, and succession are interconnected
- Airport workforce planning must be ongoing, not vacancy-driven



PART 1: THE ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK

- **Recruitment:** Bring people into aviation
- **Development:** Build their skills and careers
- **Retention:** Give them reasons to stay
- **Future Planning:** Prepare for changing needs

These four pillars operate as a connected cycle.



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LEARNING DIRECTLY FROM AIRPORTS



- Airport profiles
- Surveys and structured interviews
- Common themes
- Practices and examples

THANKS TO OUR FOCUS AIRPORTS.































PILLAR 1: RECRUITMENT

- **Key Challenges**
  - Competition for qualified candidates
  - Limited awareness of airport careers
  - Strong need for entry-level and early-career talent

- **What Airports are Doing**
  - Internships and apprenticeships
  - School and community partnerships
  - Military and transitioning-worker outreach
  - Targeted digital recruitment



Build the talent pipeline.

PILLAR 2: DEVELOPMENT

- **Grow the Workforce You Already Have**
  - Cross-training and job shadowing
  - Tuition or credential support
  - Temporary assignments
  - Mentoring and leadership development



The existing workforce is one of an airport's most valuable talent pipelines.

PILLAR 3: RETENTION

- **Give People Reasons to Stay**
  - Compensation and benefits
  - Flexibility
  - Career opportunity
  - Recognition
  - Workplace culture



Retention is rarely solved through one program alone.

PILLAR 4: FUTURE PLANNING

- **Prepare for What's Next**
  - Succession and institutional knowledge
  - Digital fluency and cybersecurity
  - Changing technical roles
  - Automation and technology readiness
  - Workforce data and forecasting



Technology changes the work, but airports still need people prepared to lead and support that change.

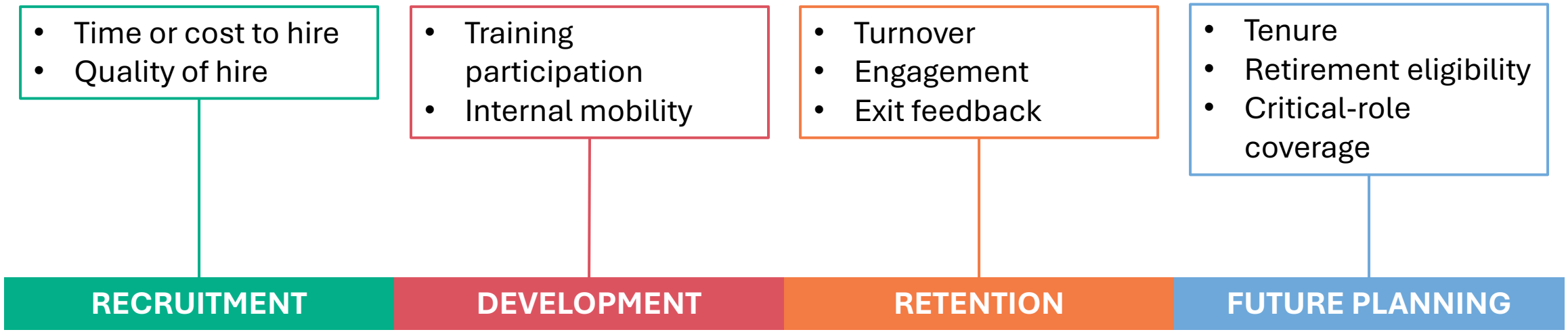
MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



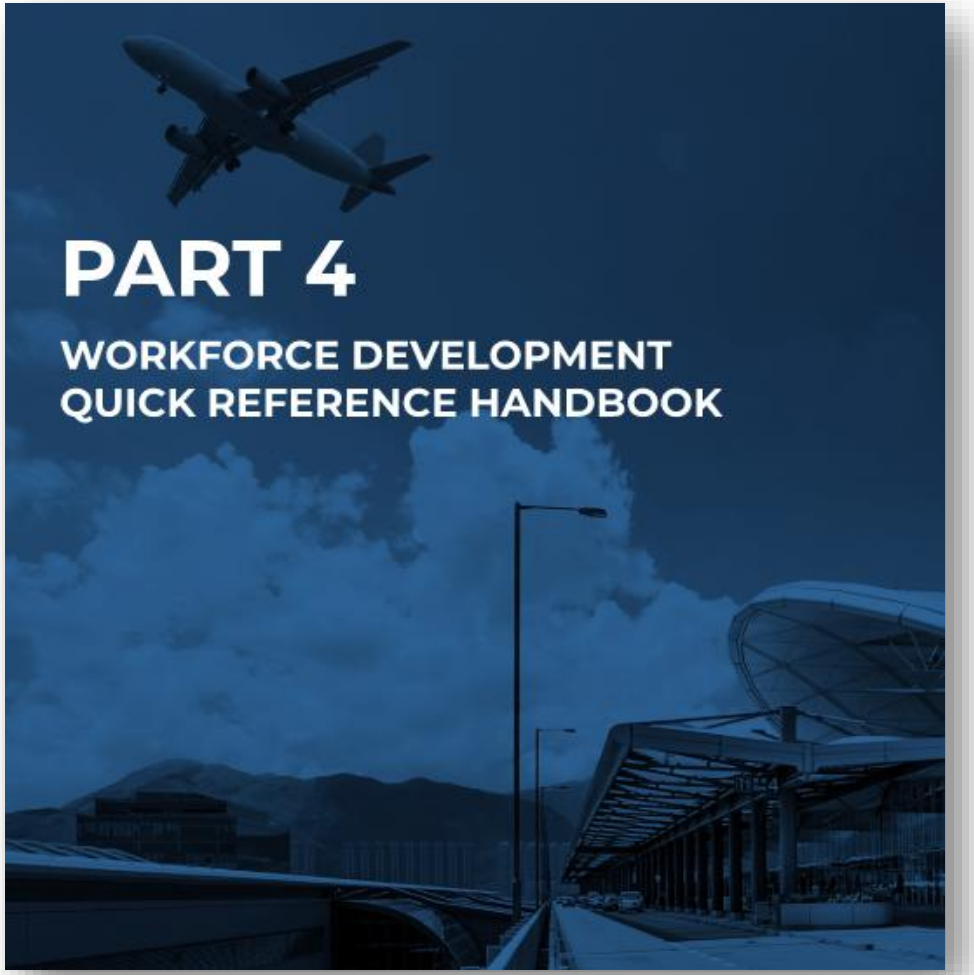
- Move from activity tracking to workforce outcomes

PART 3: MEASURING THE EFFORT

Airports do not need to track every metric.
Start with the measures tied to the workforce problem being addressed.



A PRACTICAL STARTING POINT



- Condenses the research into practical guidance
- Helps airports identify relevant actions
- Provides a starting point for internal workforce discussions

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RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS



Build pipelines, not just applicant pools

Invest in the workforce you already have

Make workforce planning a business function

Measure today while planning for tomorrow



THIS IS JUST THE STARTING POINT.

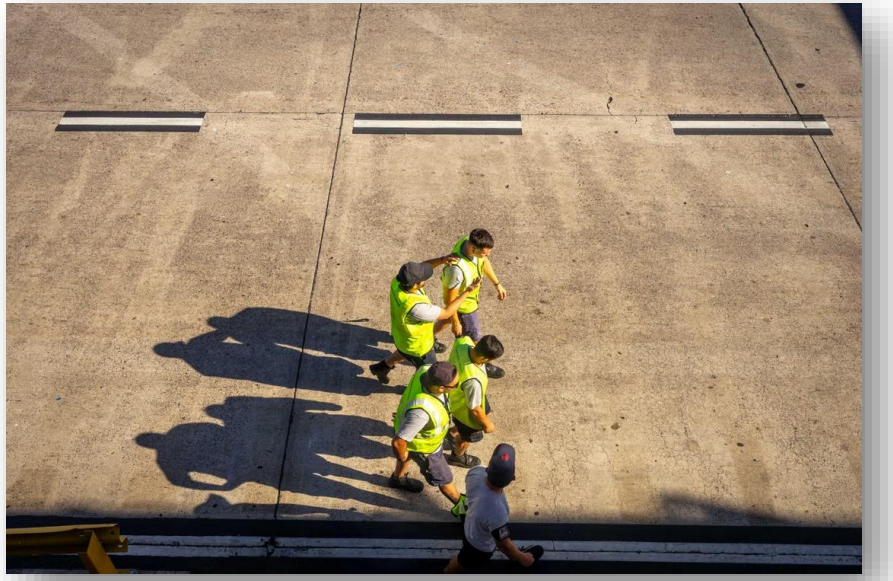
WHAT AIRPORTS CAN DO NOW

- Institutionalize workforce planning
- Build external talent and training partnerships
- Strengthen culture, development, and succession
- Use metrics, analytics, and collaboration



WHERE THE RESEARCH GOES NEXT

- **Expand** the research to medium- and large-hub case studies
- **Explore** how needs differ by airport size and complexity
- **Examine** how airports use data and technology to improve strategy and performance



Interested in contributing a case study? Talk with us.



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THANK YOU.