

POLI 7350 Second Paper Assignment

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The first step that I believe to be crucial in this scenario, is to recognize the severity of these issues the Department of Social Services is facing. Social Service is an incredibly important department to citizens and city workers alike, as many people rely on these services in their daily life. These issues are crucial and are definitely impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies and practices in place within the department. As you mentioned the idea of reorganization, it is important to view this potential process as a special opportunity for improvement, rather than an intimidating undertaking. I'd like to touch on ways to ensure the making of time efficient and rational decisions, increasing the worth of performance appraisals and measuring of productivity, as well as ways to increase workplace morale among individuals in the department.

Reorganization

The idea of reorganizing the department can seem very ominous, but it is a great opportunity to improve efficiency and responsiveness across the board. The reorganization of a department should be welcomed when an organization is in need of an overhaul. "Reengineers search for breakthrough strategies instead of incremental improvements – rather than trying to do a job 10% better, reengineers look for strategies that can work ten, or a hundred, times better" (Kettl, 2017 p. 180). It would be wise to consider a reorganizing the Department of Social Services in order to stretch your budget and increase productivity. However, it is important to note that reorganization would come with the risks of overpromising and under delivering (Kettl, 2017). In my opinion, it is worth the risks, as radical changes can lead to radical results and improvements.

Of course, reorganizing is not the only option. Focusing on downsizing, motivation, and/or a delivery framework are also plausible options in lieu of a whole reorganization.

Downsizing could help to lower the budget and avoid waste of funds, but you would be cutting down on your manpower, which would most likely not boost morale among the workplace or increase productivity. Motivation is also an effective strategy that focuses more on interpersonal relationships, cooperation, and responsiveness. This strategy could help your organizational morale and productivity rise, but if you believe that your foundation of a traditional bureaucracy is a central cause of concern then it might not fully be the solution to your issues. A delivery framework approach is also an option, but in my opinion, would not be a good solution to the departments issues, as it simply focuses on transparency, defining goals, and strong metrics (Kettle, 2017). The Department of Social Services seems to need a reorganizational approach to see the results expected.

Decision Making

The first major issue mentioned was that it takes forever to make a decision, and even then, it never seems rational. One of the first questions that organizational leaders should be asking themselves is if they have enough information to safely make a rational decision. As Kettle (2017) says, “if decision making is the central administrative act, information is the lifeblood of decision making.” This creates an issue, as no one can know everything, so it is hard to pinpoint when you have enough information to make an informed and rational decision.

Rational decision-making centers around the idea of efficiency and making your money stretch. “It seeks to produce the most output for a given level of inputs – or, to use the minimum amount of inputs needed to produce a given amount of output” (Kettl, 2017, p. 269). Kettl (2017) goes on to outline five basic steps to rational decision making: defining goals, identifying alternatives, calculating the consequences, deciding, and then beginning again with the next set of problems to arise. If the Department of Social Justice is not already following these five steps,

or any set policy when it comes to decision making, it would my suggestion to set a policy in place regarding this issue. Sitting around and taking an overt amount of time to make a decision, especially one that is not rational, is not an efficient use of time or any other resources. If the decision-making process is going to be drawn out, I believe it should be to gather for data and information that could help speed along the decision-making process.

It seems obvious that establishing policies and procedures to make rational decisions would be helpful, but they will not change anything unless they are enforced. Policies and procedures without enforcement are useless, so the hierarchy of the organization needs to be established and known. An organization is as strong as its leaders. Employees that are unwilling or unmotivated to enforce policies and keep efficiency as a goal for the organization are a weakness and will ultimately make any rational decision making harder in the long run.

Performance Measures and Productivity

In order for your decisions to have meaning and impact, you'd need to have some sort of accountability for your organization. A good way of measuring this is by executing some form of performance management to measure productivity. Your main issue is not that you do not have performance measures in place, but that your current measures do not tell you much about what your organization is actually doing and accomplishing. This could be due to not rigid enough evaluations being conducted, or to the organizations goal not being aligned with what is being measured. I would suggest starting with outlining what the goal of the organization is, its sub goals, and ways to measure if those goals are being worked towards. You have several options on how to measure performance, whether that be by "citizen feedback, a formal program evaluation, or results based management (Kettl, 2017, p. 344). Citizen feedback is a great starting point, but in my opinion, it is simply not enough when used as a single strategy. The

objective of formal program evaluations is to formally evaluate each program and “do more of what works and less of what doesn’t” (Kettl, 2017, p. 345). While the evaluations of programs are a great idea, it would cost a lot of time and resources to evaluate all equally, which is not ideal.

The approach that I would suggest implementing is a results-based management approach. This form of performance measures would be ideal if the department is having issues getting the information they want, because this approach focuses on learning implementation, instead of policy design, focuses on short-term feedback, which allows to fix problems quickly, as well as concentrating on program interventions, as to not let poor productivity continue when noticed. I think this approach would best suit the Department of Social Services, because as soon as you notice that you’re not receiving the feedback and insight that you’re looking for, you would have the mindset of changing the way you’re evaluating programs immediately. You could develop stats that you would like to see from certain departments, etc.

Morale

The final issue mentioned stated that morale at the agency was low with little motivation, but no authority to giving the employees performance raises. While not being able to offer a performance, raise is definitely a hindrance, it is not fully detrimental to your goal to motivate your employees. Employees can be motivated in a multitude of ways! It is not secret that public service workers are not the happiest bunch out there. Kettl (2017) notes that public employees are significantly less happy than private employees, according to a survey by the private consulting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, by a margin of 43 to 32 percent. It generally boils down to employees not feeling recognized for their good work.

There are many ways to make employees feel valued, but Kettl outlines five ways to help improve employee motivation and satisfaction. Firstly, it is important to remind your employees that their work is meaningful! Even though their day-to-day tasks may not seem very fulfilling, reminding them that they're contributing to an overarching goal and serving citizens can be a real attitude changer. Secondly, a hands-on approach to management could be beneficial, as it allows for managers to offer coaching to their staff so they can be their best. Third, it is very important to reinforce positive work! This could be as simple as awarding an employee of the month award, or even just sending an email of appreciation when you notice someone is doing good work. Fourth, it is important to offer growth opportunities, and not just in advancement, but in learning new skills and offering training. Even if you can't offer advancement in their pay, offering them ways to push themselves can increase motivation. Lastly, it is to form a trust in your leadership with your employees. Employees will follow their superiors example, so forming a trusting bond and having a positive attitude can go a long way to help increase morale in the workplace (Kettl, 2017).

Conclusion

As the Director of the Department of Social Services, it will be under your discretion as to the direction that you choose to take your agency in. It would be wise to take the time to outline what goals are important to the organization, and what goals are priority to keep the city council from cutting your budget. I would suggest taking the route of reorganizing your agency, which could include a new hierarchical set up, as well as ensuring that efficiency and responsiveness are at the top of the totem pole.

I encourage you to start with the three key issues stated. First, I suggest that you set policies and procedures in place for all decision making, and ensure that enough information is

gathered and analyzed before any decisions are made. Secondly, I suggest that you take a serious look at your current performance management system and consider a results-based approach, so that you can take action as soon as issues arise. Accountability is key and how you keep track of it will set a standard for your employees now and moving forward. Third, I suggest that you take some time to speak with your employees and let them know that they are appreciated and that their day-to-day work is all part of a larger overarching goal and it wouldn't be possible without their work. Your employees need to know that they matter to their department and to their citizens. Social Service plays an extremely important role for the public and your employees should know that. In my opinion, changes in morale and motivation start from the top-down, so upper management needs to make motivating their employees a priority. These are simply suggestions and alternatives, but it is my hope that you build upon these ideas and use them to reorganize your agency's hierarchy, decision making process, performance management, and motivational principles.

References:

Kettl, D. F. (2017). *Politics of the Administrative Process (7th)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.