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May 12, 2020

To: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn

From: Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

IMPROVING THE COUNTY HIRING PROCESS (ITEM 10, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 11, 2020)

At the direction of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) has undertaken a focused effort to improve the County's hiring process. Since February 2019, DHR has provided your Board with quarterly updates on various time-to-hire metrics, advised strategies for improving these metrics, and made recommendations to enhance the experience of job candidates throughout the hiring process.

In these quarterly reports, DHR recommended a number of technological enhancements to further develop the County's ability to efficiently manage job candidates, while doing so in a responsive and customer-friendly manner. This report provides a review of the various applicant tracking and technology methods described in the quarterly reports, the initiatives undertaken by DHR to address these items, and the current status of each.

Should you have any questions please contact me at (213) 974-2406, or your staff may contact Pamela Missett, Chief Deputy Director, at (213) 974-2451.

Attachment

LMG:PAM:JJ

S:\TA\LMG to BOS re Improving the Hiring Process - 05-11-2020

To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service

Improving the County Hiring Process

Applicant Tracking & Technology Recommendations

May 11, 2020

Los Angeles
County



Human Resources
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Executive Summary

This report is in response to a Board motion by Supervisors Kuehl and Hahn requesting the Department of Human Resources to provide an update on technology-based enhancements to the hiring process, as recommended in DHR’s quarterly time-to-hire reports to the Board. The table below provides a summary of the DHR recommendations and the current status of each innovative project.

Report	DHR Recommendation	Current Status
2/2019	Video interviews for candidates.	Fully implemented
2/2019	Improved data integrity. Address incorrect or incomplete information in databases used to calculate time-to-hire to prevent reporting anomalies.	Full implementation of Countywide training. Technology for integration of existing systems awaiting funding.
5/2019	Field of competition clarification. Non-county individuals apply to jobs only available to non-County employees.	Fully implemented two enhancements: requirement of employee ID on County-only job applications, and separate job portals on DHR’s website for County vs non-County applicants.
10/2019	NeoGov status update for candidates (provide updates to candidates on their current exam status).	Fully implemented for DHR exams.
10/2019	Improved banding information for candidates, informing candidates of placement relative to other candidates.	Partial implementation. Pilot testing on DHR exams.
10/2019	Reduction on reliance on shadow systems (alternatives to NeoGov used by some departments).	Partial implementation. Identifying NeoGov enhancements.
2/2019	Remote proctoring (proctoring of candidates who take a test at home or another alternate location).	Contract being executed.
2/2019	Artificial intelligence for screening of applications.	Proof-of-concept underway.
5/2019	Electronic dashboard with time-to-hire data. Dashboard available to HR staff throughout the County to provide on-demand hiring metrics.	Awaiting funding.
10/2019	Texting job candidates regarding exam status or other updates.	Awaiting funding.

Introduction and Background

Since February 2019, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) has provided the Board with quarterly updates on metrics related to the amount of time required to hire job applicants into County positions. These quarterly reports have included numerous process enhancements to reduce time-to-hire, many of which have been implemented, by DHR as well as line departments. In particular, many of the recommendations have focused on using technology to ensure that job candidates' applications, examinations, list management processes, and onboarding experiences are handled in the most expeditious, efficient way possible, while also ensuring a candidate-friendly process.

In February 2020, the Board approved the motion of Supervisors Kuehl and Hahn directing DHR to review the technology recommendations in its quarterly reports. The following information provides an update to the Board on DHR's recommendations, the innovations that have been implemented in the County's hiring process, and the current status of pending recommendations.

February 2019 Recommendations

Video Interviews

Numerous studies conducted by DHR indicated that the inclusion of live panel interviews in civil service examinations resulted in significant increases in the cycle time required to promulgate eligibility lists. As a result, DHR implemented two initiatives:

- 1.) *Reduction in reliance on interviews.* DHR identified numerous examinations where competencies measured by civil service interviews could be easily measured using more efficient (and frequently more objective) methods. For those examinations associated with "master calendar" items (those that span multiple departments) where alternatives to the interview were identified, DHR was frequently able to eliminate such interviews. As a result, the vast majority of master calendar examinations no longer include civil service interviews.
- 2.) *Implementation of video interviews.* For department-specific examinations, as well as for a small number of master-calendar examinations, DHR identified video interviewing as a method for more quickly conducting a large number of interviews, while maintaining fairness and objectivity, and improving the County image as a public-sector leader in the use of technology to assess job applicants.

Video interviewing represents technology that allows the organization to record an interviewer (or written interview questions) that a candidate can access on demand at any time or place of their choosing, record their responses to the questions, and submit those responses electronically. The organization is then able to use raters to view these responses around their busy schedules and score the candidate's recorded responses. This has the advantage of being more convenient for job candidates, while saving the County significant resources in scheduling interviews, assembling rating panels, and reducing the number of "no-shows" to zero.

In order to implement video interviewing, DHR successfully competed for a Productivity Investment Fund grant to initiate this technology on a trial basis in 2017. After pilot-testing the technology on two

examinations, DHR rolled out the service to all departments, accompanied by informational sessions and training.

Fifteen departments have used the technology as of March 2020, either as part of the civil service examination process or in selection/hiring interviews for candidates who are job finalists. The number of interviews conducted using this technology has been rising since its introduction (just over 10,000 interviews conducted as of the end of April 2020), and we anticipate that the trend will continue when the current hiring freeze is lifted, assuming funds are available to continue the contract with a vendor to supply the service.

Remote Proctoring

DHR currently administers over 20,000 paper/pencil tests annually. Most of these tests are administered in a proctored setting, requiring facilities, materials, staff, and equipment, all of which represent significant costs. A typical exam administration for a single exam in a proctored environment with 2,500 candidates can be expected to cost about \$25,000. While DHR has made major advances in reducing the pressure on its facilities and staff through the innovative use of technology for other types of tests (e.g., online unproctored testing and video interviewing, as discussed above), there continue to be challenges in meeting the ever-growing demand for the provision of testing services, especially those requiring in-person administration.

In particular, cognitive tests can be subject to deceptive practices, and as a result, require proctored administration. While there are several different potential solutions to this problem, a straightforward approach has been utilized in virtual classrooms in the education industry, where tests are “proctored” remotely. Students can take a computer-administered test in their homes or other convenient location, while being “watched” or recorded by their webcam. The video can then be reviewed by an analyst, either live or at a later time, to identify cheating or any other deceptive practices, or be analyzed using Artificial Intelligence, which can flag suspicious behaviors for further review.

This approach has proven to be highly successful in the education industry. As a result of its innovative proposal to adapt this strategy to pre-employment assessments, DHR won a Productivity Investment Fund grant in 2018 to pilot test the technology for use in civil service examinations managed by DHR.

DHR foresees several major benefits to remote proctoring. We expect costs to administer a remotely-proctored exam to be approximately half of the cost of administering the same test in a proctored environment. Moreover, a remotely-proctored test will allow candidates to self-schedule their testing session, resulting in greater flexibility for candidates, higher candidate satisfaction and fewer “no shows”. Based on prior studies, DHR expects approximately 10% fewer no shows, thereby improving testing efficiency and reducing the need for late and other special test administrations.

After an extensive contracting process to procure a vendor for remote proctoring services, a purchase order was issued for the selected firm in April 2020. If this expense is approved, DHR expects to immediately initiate remote proctoring for those tests that have traditionally required in-person proctoring. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, remote proctoring will provide the County with the tools to further ensure the safety of our job candidates and our County employees, while continuing

skills assessment of job candidates, particularly in fields deemed as essential during these inauspicious times.

Data Integrity

DHR provides quarterly reports to departments on a variety of metrics associated with the amount of time required to hire the average applicant for County jobs. These metrics have fallen into three major categories: exam time (application to eligible list), list time (eligible list to conditional offer), and onboarding time (offer date to hire date).

NeoGov is the County's main system-of-record for tracking most examination and list data. A second system, ePAR, captures activity from the onboarding process, but does not integrate with NEOGOV. Once all steps are completed in ePAR, this system sends the hire information to eHR, the County's HR and Payroll system of record. To produce accurate Time-to-Hire reporting, candidate data must be reconciled between these three systems. There are two major sources of anomalies when reconciling data between these systems:

- 1.) *Hires appearing in eHR, but not in NeoGov.* DHR estimates that up to one-third of hires are not being captured in NeoGov. This is attributable to hires who are made outside the typical workflow, and may include executive/unclassified hires and hires made using other systems (for example, the Department of Health Services hires a number of federally-sourced physicians who are not processed in NeoGov).

In investigating this issue, DHR has determined that there are some "shadow systems" maintained by departments to track these hiring activities (a separate section below provides more details). Further, DHR has proposed to invest in integration technology, where eHR and NeoGov are more fully integrated, so that departments must use NeoGov to track offers and hires. As a result, this data would be seamlessly captured and any discrepancies quickly identified and addressed. DHR will seek funding for this enhancement.

- 2.) *Reconciling date discrepancies.* NeoGov has the capacity to capture the dates an offer is made to a job candidate and the date that a candidate starts work, which are essential for two of the reporting metrics. However, some departments do not complete the typical workflow hiring process, or only partially complete the process, in NeoGov (for example, a department may only take paper and pen notes, never updating the system when a candidate is selected). In those cases, DHR's time-to-hire calculations for list time and for onboarding time are not able to be made, as both calculations are dependent on offer date and/or hire date. Further, data discrepancies were found, which result in inaccurate calculations for list and onboarding times.

Tighter integration between ePAR and NeoGov to require the selection of a candidate from NeoGov would result in fewer anomalies. Alternatively, a switch to only using NeoGov to handle transactions currently processed by ePAR would also result in fewer discrepancies. In the interim, DHR initiated in-person communications and trainings with departments on the proper completion of these fields within NeoGov. This communication has proved to be working as data integrity has increased since DHR started this process.

Moreover, DHR implemented controls within NeoGov such that an analyst attempting to enter an offer date occurring after a hire date within NeoGOov will result in a flag, warning the analyst of their actions. We anticipate that this enhancement will significantly reduce errors in the calculation of list and onboarding times.

Subsequent analyses have determined that DHR's efforts have largely been successful, with the vast majority of offer dates being completed, and the elimination of nearly all negative onboarding times, suggesting that departments are now more vigilant about the accurate completion of this variable.

Artificial Intelligence

A major contributor to the duration of the examination portion of the hiring cycle is the amount of time required to review applications. The County receives about 400,000 job applications annually, with DHR receiving approximately 80,000 of these. Each of these applications is manually reviewed by an analyst, and in the case of difficult or borderline cases, an application may be viewed by several analysts, their supervisors, and managers. This is a time-consuming process that is labor- and resource-intensive.

DHR has proposed a number of solutions to this problem (see below for additional innovations), including the implementation of artificial intelligence to quickly review job applications and determine whether each one meets the Minimum Requirements of the job as set forth by CEO classification.

Artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms can be "taught" to review an applicant's education and job experience as submitted on an application and/or a resume, compare that candidate's credentials with the minimum requirements for a position, and render a determination of the extent to which the candidate meets the requirements and the confidence with which this determination is made. The manner in which the AI functions can be through several mechanisms, including "deep learning", whereby thousands of previously-reviewed applications are entered into the algorithm, teaching the algorithm the kinds of applications that met requirements versus those that didn't. The algorithm then applies those learned rules to new applications, along with the degree of confidence in the algorithm's recommendation. Analysts can then safely accept or reject those applications that have near-certain confidence in acceptance or rejection, and can manually review those that are borderline or where confidence in a computer-generated recommendation is low.

Several departments, including DHR, currently use more basic forms of AI to render qualification decisions. "Supplemental questionnaires", a series of questions accompanying the application form, ask applicants to respond to detailed questions about their education or experience so that applicants can be automatically excluded if they do not clearly indicate they meet minimum requirements. However, this technology is impractical and inadequate for those examinations with complex job requirements or where the requirements involve significant interpretation, which are those that require the greatest resources in the review process.

DHR has begun evaluating using advanced AI technology for the rapid evaluation of job applications. A proof-of-concept has been initiated using NeoGov, and this technology continues to be studied to determine ways in which the County may deploy it.

May 2019 Recommendations

Field of Competition

As stated above, a major contributor to the length of the examination portion of the hiring cycle is the amount of time required to review applications. Approximately 40% of candidates applying to County jobs do not meet the minimum requirements of the job for which they are applying. Many of these applicants are disqualified because they are non-County employees applying for jobs that are restricted to current County employees. Since January 2018, there have been over 85,000 non-County employees applying to Promotional Only or Transfer Opportunities.

DHR has devised two automated technology-based solutions to these problems related to clarifying the field of competition, both of which have been implemented:

- 1.) *Changes to the application process.* When applying to examinations that are only open to County employees, the system now requires the applicant to enter their employee identification number. If the section is left blank or an invalid identification number is entered, the potential applicant is not allowed to proceed and asked to visit other job opportunities open to all candidates.

While this system is expected to be highly successful in removing the vast majority of non-County individuals seeking to apply to jobs only open to County employees, some exceptions will require continued manual intervention. For example, temporary employees of the County are typically ineligible to compete in exams intended only for County employees. But as temporary workers are generally assigned employee identification numbers, they would be qualified using this system. However, the number of such employees is sufficiently small that the volume of manual review required for these cases is not expected to be significant.

- 2.) *Multiple job portals.* DHR advertises County jobs on its website, <https://hr.lacounty.gov>. The feed used by our website to populate open jobs comes from NeoGov, where nearly all County job postings are made. NeoGov has recently made changes allowing for the systemic identification of jobs open to the public versus those only open to County employees. DHR has used this information to develop multiple portals for job-seekers, so those seeking a job for the first time within the County are directed to one portal where jobs have been filtered to those open to the public, while County employees are directed to another portal containing all open jobs. Although there is nothing preventing an external applicant from clicking on the link for County employees only, we believe this up-front bifurcation of applicants will significantly reduce confusion among potential applicants about to which jobs they may apply. Additionally, as a result of the separate portals, third party recruitment sites (e.g. Google Jobs) that pull job openings from the DHR website for posting on external sites now only receive jobs open to the public.

Since implementation of the portal changes and employee validation feature in late November 2019, there have been only 270 non-County employees applying to Promotional Only or Transfer

Opportunities. This represents a reduction of 98.5% of external applicants being disqualified because they applied to County only positions. Analysis of these exception cases is on-going.

October 2019 Recommendations

Electronic Dashboard

In October 2018, the Board instructed DHR to gather and report on a variety of time-to-hire metrics, including end-to-end data that determines the amount of time required for applicants to move through the process of being hired at the County, starting with the job posting and ending with the hires' first day on the job. Since then, DHR has provided data reports on a quarterly basis, both in writing and in oral presentations to the Operations Cluster. These reports and presentations have focused on providing basic time-to-hire information on several metrics, including the amount of time candidates spend in the exam phase, the list phase, and in the onboarding phase of hiring, and provide further breakdown by department.

Further data is also accessible in the information available to DHR, but given the volume of recruitments and available variables, we have chosen to focus on those required in the Board's motion and of the greatest overall utility in presenting hiring time in the County's departments.

As discussed in this document, DHR accesses the data using two primary sources: eHR and NeoGov. DHR matches the data generated by the two datasets, then conducts a series of calculations in order to provide the Board with these reports. This is a manual and cumbersome process. In order to automate this functionality and enable departments to easily obtain reports on-demand on many different variables related to time-to-hire, DHR has been engaged in an effort to develop a "dashboard" that contains this data in an easy-to-use format. Such a dashboard would be intended for use by departmental personnel to diagnose what aspects of the hiring cycle contribute most to delays and assist in the analysis of ways in which hiring processes may be streamlined or rationalized.

It was expected that this effort would result in a first prototype of a dashboard by June, 2020. DHR had requested Board approval to use ITF funds approved by the CEO to implement this dashboard. Although the funds had been recommended for approval, unfortunately, the fund is currently frozen. Once the freeze is lifted, DHR will proceed with its request for Board approval of funding for the dashboard. In the interim, we will continue to provide the Board with updates on basic time-to-hire metrics. For the most recent data available, please see the last section of this report.

Candidate Status Updates.

In an effort to ensure that County job applicants have more information about the status of their candidacy, DHR has embarked on a number of technology-based enhancements to improve the quantity and quality of communication with candidates. These enhancements focus on the exam portion of the hiring cycle. Additional work will be needed to ensure that applicants are given information about their candidacy throughout the entire hiring process, particularly as the exam process is less lengthy, on average, than the post-exam processes (list time and onboarding time).

- 1.) *NeoGov status.* Every applicant to a County job has a NeoGov account. DHR has pilot-tested the ability to update each applicant's status in that account. As a result, the applicant can see one of five different statuses that reflects their current stage in the examination process, such as "application under review" and "tests currently being scored". This status is continuously updated by DHR analysts as the candidate moves through the steps of the examination. This functionality has now been implemented in all DHR-conducted examinations, including those examinations for which DHR has been contracted to provide examination services to line departments. DHR will also work with departments conducting their own exams to implement this functionality.
- 2.) *Text status.* NeoGov has recently partnered with a third-party vendor to introduce the capability of communicating to job applicants via SMS/text. This add-on functionality would enable the County to immediately provide real-time updates to candidates on various items related to their candidacy, including examination notices or information, list updates, and onboarding information. Alternatively, it can also be used to instruct applicants to check their online NeoGov account, where additional information can be provided to the candidate. This feature is an add-on in NeoGov, and would incur additional fees. The funding for implementing this feature has not yet been provided.
- 3.) *Banding notices.* Historically, exam results notices have contained information about the candidate's score and the band in which the score is placed. While illuminating, this information may not always be especially useful without additional contextualization. For example, a score in Band 2 may be regarded with optimism if there are no candidates in a higher band, or may be regarded as disappointing if there are hundreds of candidates in Band 1 with a small number of vacancies. As a result, DHR has pilot tested a new exam results notice that includes the number of candidates in the same band as each candidate and the number of candidates in higher bands, thereby providing each candidate with more relevant data about the possibility of being hired. Nearly 500 results notices across four examinations were sent in the pilot, with anecdotal information suggesting very few inquiries and higher satisfaction. DHR plans to implement the new notices across all examinations it conducts in the near future, with additional plans to work with departments that conduct their own examinations.

Shadow Systems

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, DHR uses two systems to generate time-to-hire reports for the Board. When matching data in these two systems, there are often employees who are shown to have been hired, but who do not appear in the County's systems for tracking who is eligible for hire or are not on a County eligibility list.

Upon investigation, DHR has found that shadow systems exist generally to supplement existing functionality offered by NeoGov. For example, a department may use NeoGov for the examination process, but declines to use it for providing eligibility lists to hiring managers as a specific MOU may dictate the order in which names appear on a list, and such an order is not possible using current NeoGov capabilities. On the other hand, a department may still use NeoGov to process a job offer and

only uses an external system to track background investigations. The majority of these shadow systems are simple spreadsheets used for tracking purposes, and as a result, do not warrant further action.

However, in those few instances where a shadow system exists because the function is not available in NeoGov, DHR is currently exploring ways of enhancing NeoGov to address these issues, and also provide additional training to County staff using NeoGov to ensure greater adoption of this system's features. However, given the valid nature and sensitivity of many of these systems, it is unlikely that DHR will be able to eliminate their use entirely.

2018-2019 and Q4 2019 Time To Hire Results and Analysis

Please see table below for time-to-hire metrics broken down by year and by quarter for 2019. Time-to-hire is defined as the cumulative average amount of time a candidate takes in the exam, list, and onboarding phases of being hired, from the date of application to the first day on the job.

Time to hire in 2019 was significantly longer than 2018 primarily due to increases in List Time (defined as the number of days between the date a candidate is placed on an eligibility list and the date that candidate is made a job offer) and Onboarding Time (defined as the number of days between the date that a candidate is offered a job and the date of their first day on the job):

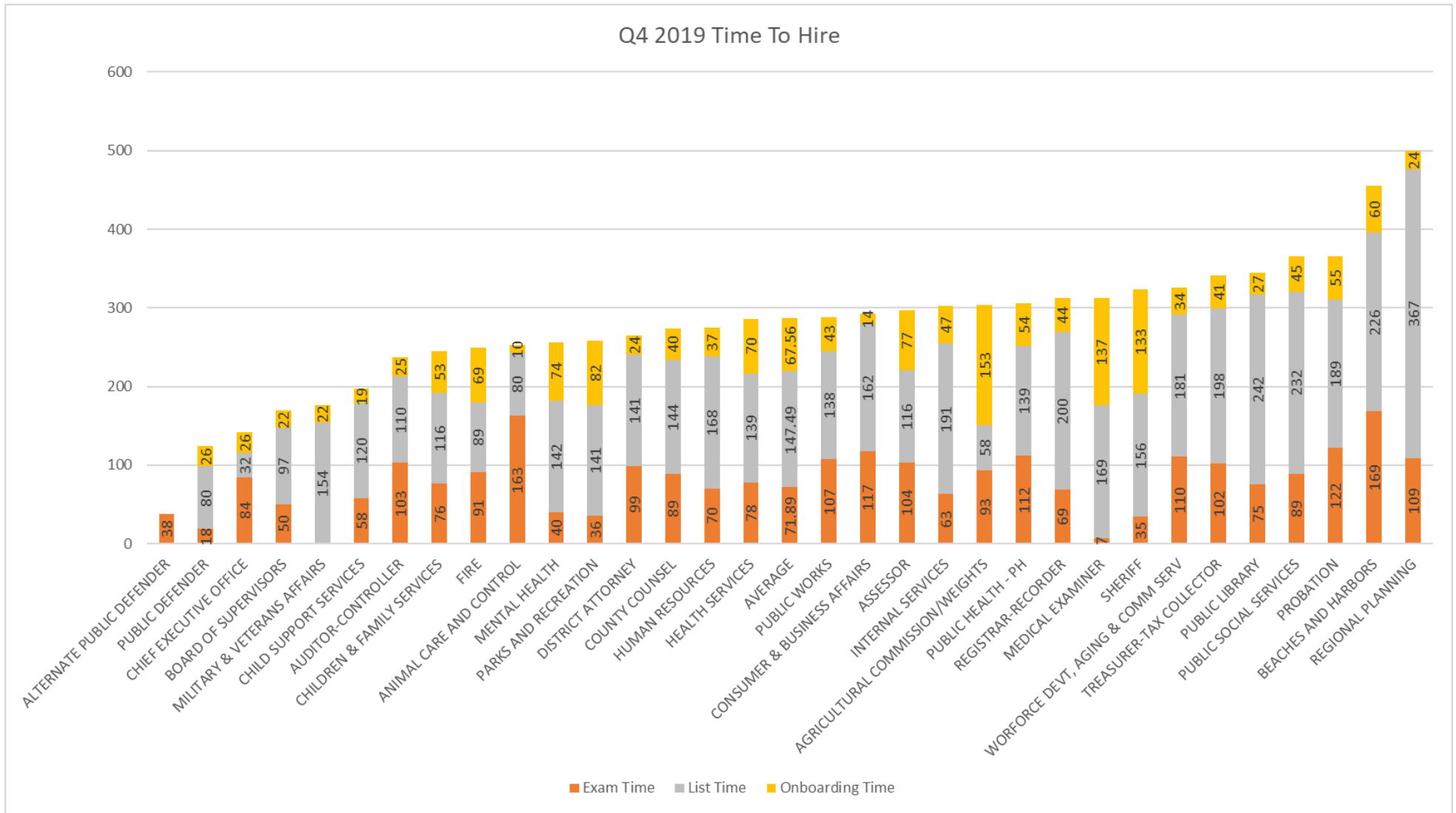
1. List time increases are a result of several factors, including the statistical artifact of beginning collection of this data in 2018: as the life of lists aged starting with January 1, 2018, the amount of time that candidates spent on those lists was longer, moving forward in time. We expect this statistic to plateau in 2020. Moreover, many departments elected to extend existing lists, rather than expend resources to conduct new exams and establish new lists, thereby lengthening the average amount of time that candidates spend in this phase.
2. Onboarding time increases are primarily due to hiring activity in Q3 by two departments, which accounted for nearly one-third of all hires in the County in that quarter. The rapid pace of hiring in these departments resulted in candidates being held in the onboarding phase for longer periods, as the departments struggled to process and onboard the high volume of candidates in a timely way.

See next page for 2018, 2019, and quarterly data. The following pages also contain departmental information on the three phases of hiring.

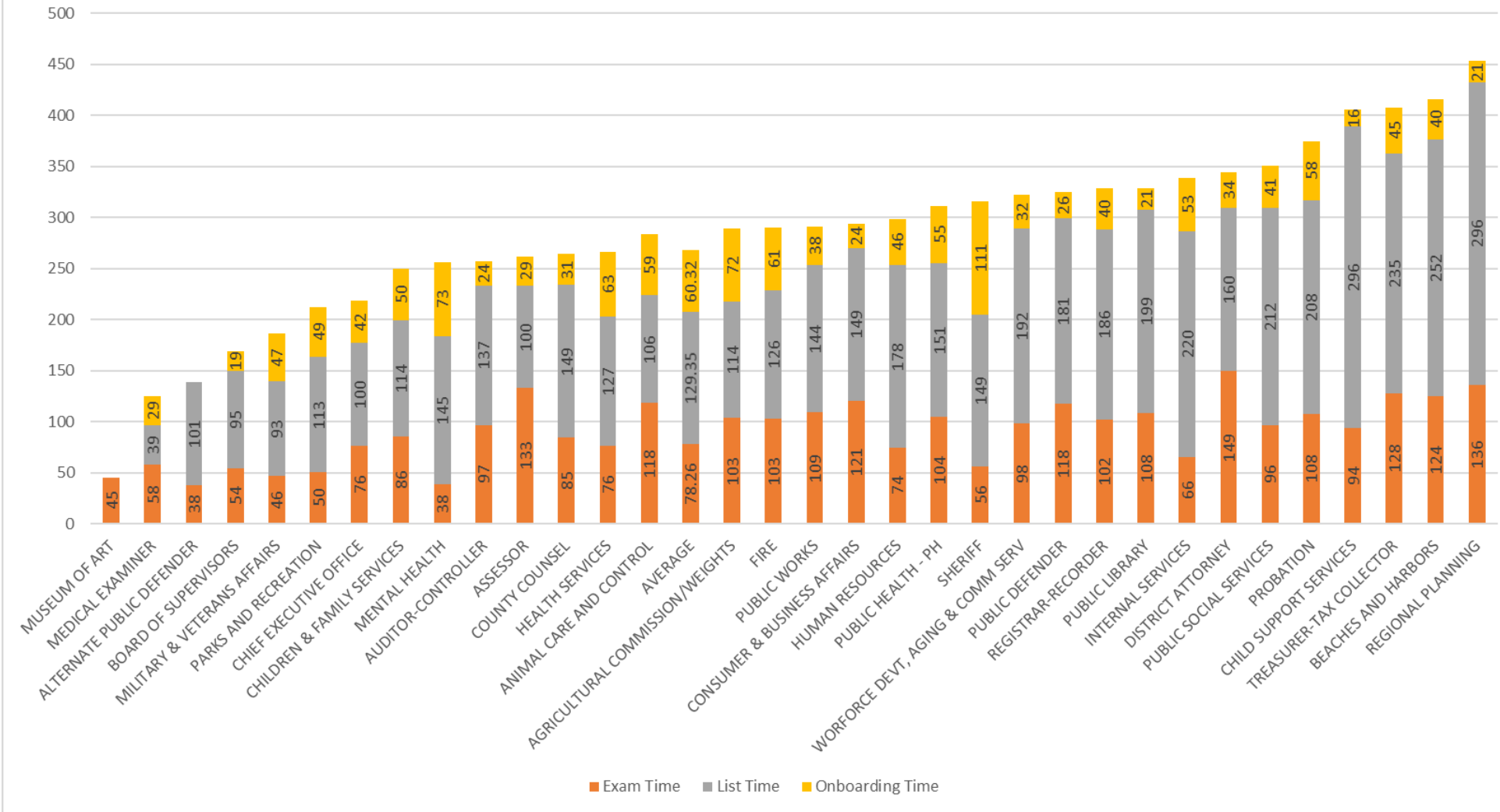
Time-To-Hire Metrics, 2018-19

	2018	2019	2019 by Quarter
Number of Hires	7,106	12,654	Q1: 2,798
			Q2: 3,244
			Q3: 3,289
			Q4: 3,323
Exam Time	83.0	78.3	Q1: 87.5
			Q2: 89.4
			Q3: 73.9
			Q4: 71.9
List Time	64.8	129.4	Q1: 106.5
			Q2: 130.2
			Q3: 129.6
			Q4: 147.5
Onboarding Time	21.6	60.3	Q1: 41.2
			Q2: 40.7
			Q3: 90.0
			Q4: 67.6
Total Time	169.4	267.9	Q1: 230.3
			Q2: 263.5
			Q3: 293.4
			Q4: 286.9

Department Metrics



CY 2019 Time To Hire



Conclusion

DHR has made significant progress on a variety of fronts in deploying technology in several innovative ways to facilitate the efficient, candidate-friendly processing of job applicants through the County's hiring process. Through the use of these technologies, including video interviewing, remote proctoring, electronic real-time notifications to candidates, and directing candidates to appropriate electronic job portals, DHR has successfully reduced the time required to examine job candidates. Moving forward, DHR anticipates deploying additional technologies, including artificial intelligence and electronic dashboards, to drive further efficiencies and empower managers to obtain on-demand hiring information.

Regarding time to hire, while examination cycle time has decreased from 2018 to 2019, the amount of time from the date that candidates are placed on eligible lists to their start dates has increased. This increase is largely driven by the amount of time that candidates are on an eligible list, waiting to be considered for a job. Although there may be some justification for this (for example, departments preferring to use an existing list rather than expending resources and time to develop a new one), DHR will continue to monitor the metric to ensure that candidates are provided fair and timely opportunities for employment.



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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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September 11, 2020

To: Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
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From: Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

IMPROVING THE COUNTY HIRING PROCESS – CIVIL SERVICE RULE REFORM AND HR ARCHITECTURE ASSESSMENT (ITEM 10, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 11, 2020)

At the direction of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) has engaged in a comprehensive hiring innovation project to improve various aspects of the County's hiring process, from both the candidate and the organizational perspectives. This project has resulted in several important advances that have led to reduced examination time and use of technology in innovative ways. In support of this initiative, your Board has been provided updates on these improvements over the last several years.

Although much has been accomplished in the current ecosystem, continued progress will be dependent on systemic and fundamental changes to how human resources functions are organized and how HR practices are governed. Your Board has recognized the importance of these factors and has asked DHR to investigate the feasibility of changes to the Civil Service Rules related to County hiring practices and assess the state of HR architecture throughout the County. Changes to the Rules and to HR architecture will be important to ensure the County remains competitive in the public and private job markets.

The attached report provides Your Board with DHR's status update on these efforts. Much progress has been made in drafting language or changes to modernize and streamline the Civil Service Rules, so they reflect the current legal environment while allowing greater flexibility and promoting fair, merit-based hiring principles. Moreover, DHR conducts a wide variety of assessments to ensure the operational efficiency and compliance of its hiring practices. Next steps will include initiatives that underscore the County's leading role in the use of best practices for assessment and hiring.

Should you have any questions you may contact me at (213) 974-2406, or your staff may contact Pamela Missett, Chief Deputy Director, at (213) 974-2451.

Attachment

LMG:PAM:JJ

Improving the County Hiring Process: Review and Revision of Civil Service Rules & HR Architecture Assessment

September 11, 2020

Los Angeles
County

Human Resources
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Executive Summary

A motion by your Board in February 2020, requested that DHR a.) review Civil Service Rules related to hiring, and b.) assess current HR architecture and delegated authority functions as they impact hiring processes. Key takeaways are listed below for each of these two sections.

Civil Service Rules

Civil Service Rules (CSRs) governing hiring and promotion in County service have not been revised since 1988. Numerous advances in technology and business processes have taken place since that time, rendering some aspects of the County's rules obsolete and forcing DHR and other County departments to use outdated methods and procedures. Current rules may also have the unintentional effect of limiting your Board's ability to effect change in reaching targeted populations. Rules also limit the flexibility of hiring managers to reach and hire the most effective job candidates. Moreover, research has indicated that Civil Service Rule reform is an important priority for County stakeholders.

DHR began efforts to revise various CSRs in 2017. In response to your Board's February 2020 motion, rules specific to the application, assessment, and hiring process have been prioritized for review and potential revision. DHR has completed its review and proposed revisions to Civil Service Rules, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11. A summary of the most notable recommended changes are provided in this report.

DHR has consulted with CEO, Employee Relations. SEIU and CCU have been informed and are reviewing the proposed CSR changes. Departmental HR managers and County Counsel are also being consulted.

HR Architecture

DHR currently administers an Assessment Program to review HR operations and systems countywide to ensure operational efficiency of each department's HR operations. To make best use of limited resources, DHR partners with departmental staff to administer online surveys that generate significant data about each department's HR function. Such data is diagnostic in nature and enables an assessment of HR efficiency.

Recent assessments indicate that departments are in excess of 90% compliance with County policies and regulations. Further studies will be conducted by DHR to identify the effectiveness of its hiring tools and methods, as well as the extent to which current HR organizational structures facilitate (or inhibit) such tools and methods.

Introduction

DHR currently provides your Board with quarterly reports that provide information on metrics related to the average amount of time required to hire or promote job candidates in County service. This report details additional efforts to further streamline the process by which applicants are hired or promoted, beyond other efforts that have been previously documented.

Specifically, this report is in response to a February 11, 2020, Board motion by Supervisors Sheila Kuehl and Janice Hahn to Improve the County Hiring Process. It provides an update on two critical issues required to advance the County's efforts in modernizing and transforming the way in which County employees are recruited, assessed, onboarded, and hired or promoted in County service:

- 1.) A review of administrative and process components of the County Civil Service Rules (CSRs) related to recruitment and hiring, and
- 2.) An assessment of the current architectural structure and hiring authority and accountability at the County, including an examination of appropriate central versus line department responsibilities.

The motion also requested a review of applicant tracking and technology issues identified in our quarterly metrics reports. A report responding to that topic was provided separately to your Board in May 2020.

The following report is divided into two sections corresponding to these two reviews requested by the Board motion.

DHR looks forward to continuing its progress in improving the County's process for hiring the best, most qualified job candidates in an expeditious manner, while simultaneously upholding the County's commitment to ensuring diversity, fairness, and equity.

SECTION I: REVIEW AND REVISION OF CIVIL SERVICE RULES

Background & Context

In response to a February 11, 2020 Board motion of Supervisors Kuehl and Hahn, DHR has expanded its efforts to re-engineer the process of hiring and promoting personnel in County service. DHR has already initiated several additional projects to address various aspects of the hiring process, including the implementation of a system to monitor the amount of time required to hire County employees on a quarterly basis. This data has been provided to the Board in separate reports and has shown how DHR's efforts to improve examination cycle time has improved significantly since 2018. Among other things, the current motion requests DHR to review the County's Civil Service Rules (CSRs) governing hiring and assessments.

This section of the report is responsive to the first directive of that motion which instructs the Director of Personnel, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), County Counsel and the County's Labor Representatives, to review administrative and process components of the County CSRs related to recruitment and hiring and submit a report on recommended changes, updates, clarifications, along with an assessment of the negotiability of the changes within 180 days.

The most recent revisions to the CSRs occurred in 2007. However, CSRs 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 25 related to hiring have not been revised since 1988. Since the last changes to the CSRs, there have been updates to the laws that govern employment, significant advancements in technology, and improvements in industry practices that necessitate a review of the existing rules governing the County's merit-based employment system. Updating CSRs will facilitate compliance with the existing laws, mitigate legal exposure, ensure fairness, achieve efficiencies, and enable the implementation of innovative best practices.

The recommended changes to CSRs are a result of the increasing need to create flexibility in the assessment of candidates and in hiring processes to better meet the needs of county service, support recruitment efforts for current Board priorities, and improve business processes. The changes are consistent with the audit findings cited in the April 2017 Citizen's Economy and Efficiency Commission report, as well as with more recent recommendations made by outside consultants. The changes will align CSRs with relevant State laws and are written broadly to ensure that future law changes, advancements in technology, and businesses process improvements will not require additional rule changes.

Previous Research and Sample Rules Requiring Modification

Primary Research

Deloitte Consultants were retained by DHR in 2019 to conduct primary research into several aspects of the County's recruitment and hiring process, including ways to improve efficiency, enhance the candidate experience, and enhance the experience for hiring managers. Several methodologies were used to conduct this research, such as surveys, process mapping, best practices benchmarking, "innovation labs", and review of existing policies and procedures.

Many findings and recommendations were provided, including specific suggestions to revamp significant portions of Civil Service Rules 7, 10, and 11. Research identified underlying conditions that gave rise to these recommendations, for example, the lengthy process required to create a new exam, and difficulty in reaching the best applicants on a list of qualified candidates. In fact, Civil Service Rule reform was one of the fundamental changes that underpin many of the more-specific suggestions made by the report, such as the implementation of enhanced technology, which is currently inhibited by many outdated CSRs (see below).

It should be noted that many of the recommendations made by Deloitte were ultimately adopted by DHR, including use of artificial intelligence to screen applications, clearer pathways for internal vs. external applicants, and more efficient use of the County's applicant tracking system. These changes have resulted in increased efficiency in the handling of County job applicants, especially during the initial assessment phase of the employment cycle, which has shown a decrease in cycle-time of about 25%. However, despite this progress, some of the systemic root-causes of more intractable issues remain, and those are unlikely to improve without addressing inefficiencies caused by the constraints of the current Civil Service Rules.

Beyond the research conducted by Deloitte, the County's Citizens' Economy and Efficiency Commission conducted a review and analysis of the County's Civil Service hiring process in 2017 and made a series of recommendations to rules that affect the way in which the County processes and assesses job applicants. In particular, the Commission recommended changes to rules that regulate hiring practices for internal candidates, as well as improvements to rules governing the number of available candidates for hiring managers.

Below are some examples of rules that have been targeted for modification.

Examples of Outdated Rules

Some rules are clearly from another time, and do not reflect availability of technology. For example:

- Rule 6.05(B) specifies that written notices to applicants shall be mailed postage prepaid, which was written before electronic communication was widely available.
- Rules 6.03(D), 7.03, and 7.10 specify that notices about examinations shall be posted on the County's bulletin board, and in Rule 2.47 specifies the location of that bulletin board as being in Room 493 of the Hall of Administration.

Examples of Rules Inhibiting Efficient Targeting of Applicants

There are a few rules that have the unintentional effect of inhibiting the County's ability to ensure a diverse workforce, or may even sanction actions that were not illegal in 1988, but would be prohibited today.

- Rule 8.03 allows the appointment of skilled and unskilled workers, but does not explicitly support the identification of targeted populations for consideration by the County. DHR

currently uses a number of workarounds to enable your Board to target such populations, but these solutions are not authorized by the rule.

- Rule 7.15 specifies that only the wife or widow of a veteran is eligible for certain veterans' benefits, suggesting that husbands, widowers, or non-binary individuals married to a veteran may not be eligible for such benefits.

Examples of Rules Impacting Efficiency

While the rules ensure a merit-based approach, many rules do so in a manner that leads to protracted hiring times thereby losing many highly qualified candidates in the process, or by unnecessarily restricting the ability of hiring managers to hire the most suitable candidate for the job.

- Rule 7.14 specifies that the arbitrary score of 70% shall be the passpoint. It does not make allowances for more (or less) difficult exams, meaning that the passpoint has different meaning in different exams, regardless of who is qualified for the job.
- Rule 11.01(C) specifies that candidates shall be grouped into five score bands, regardless of difficulty of exam, number of qualified applicants, and true skill differences between candidates. For example, this rule indicates that candidates who score 95 are better suited for a job than candidates who score 94.
- Rule 11.01(E) arbitrarily requires that hiring managers consider candidates in the highest band if such band has at least five candidates in it, regardless of whether candidates with a better fit can be found in a lower band.

Process and Procedure

DHR began analyzing the Civil Service Rules governing exams and hiring activity, including rules 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11, in 2017. In order to ensure that various aspects of each rule were considered, multiple stakeholders were included in this effort, including Countywide Talent Assessment for examination-related content, Policy, Appeals, and Civil Service Advocacy.

At the time these rules were being revised, DHR elected to first move forward on another Civil Service Rule, prioritizing Rule 9 on Medical Standards for Employment. As that effort has now moved on to another phase, DHR has renewed its focus on rules related to assessment and hiring of job candidates. Subject Matter Experts from DHR's Talent Assessment division, Impact division, and Policy section used work already completed in 2017, along with input from the department's Information Technology division, Appeals section, and Employee Wellness branch.

Rules were first vetted to determine whether a rewrite was necessary based on whether the rule reflects current best practice while upholding merit principles. Those rules deemed to not meet this threshold were rewritten to capture effective governance practices related to the rule in question, or in some cases, deleted altogether if deemed to not be necessary. The majority of sub-rules within each rule were rewritten; a smaller portion were left as-is or deleted. Re-written rules were developed

specifically to be “future-proofed” and be sufficiently flexible in anticipating advances and changes in methods, policies, technology, and priorities.

In addition to these rule revisions, DHR has developed a “plain language” version of these Civil Service Rules. DHR is frequently asked by County constituents to explain exam-related rules in language that is easily accessible for the public at large or interested parties who do not have familiarity with the County’s policies or human resources practices. This version of the rules is not intended to be an official document, nor would it be used to adjudicate cases requiring application or interpretation of the rules. It is merely intended to facilitate a basic understanding of the rules by non-HR laypersons, and would not be intended to be used as a stand-alone document. DHR will monitor acceptance of this document, and if successful, will determine the feasibility of translating this document to other languages.

Summary of Notable Changes in Proposed Rule Revisions

Although the majority of the sub-rules were revised in one way or another, some of the major changes being proposed are summarized below.

Rule 6: Applications and Applicants

- Amends rules regarding how applications will be accepted to increase flexibility for applicants.
- Revises, modernizes, and removes non-compliant language regarding “physically and mentally unfit” applicants, among other requirements.
- Updates outdated postal requirements on nonacceptance of applications.

Rule 7: Competitive Examinations

- Updates and modernizes the requirement of posting of jobs on a “bulletin board”.
- Eliminates relative comparison of candidates (comparing candidates to one another, rather than an objective stated standard).
- Eliminates outdated language on “affirmative action”.
- Clarifies that multiple-choice tests may not always be given via written means (paper/pencil).
- Eliminates the requirement of the Appraisal of Promotability in promotional exams.
- Eliminates requiring an arbitrary passpoint of 70.
- Clarifies eligibility for veteran’s credit and eliminates illegal gender-based eligibility.
- Eliminates the requirement that an appellant must provide specific information about the error in a test in order to appeal it, thereby improving candidates’ ability to challenge examinations.
- Standardizes retention of all documents at five years.

Rule 8: Noncompetitive Examinations and Labor Appointments

- Eliminates requirement that noncompetitive exams may only be used to qualify candidates.

- Allows special populations identified by the Director of Personnel and Board of Supervisors to be temporarily appointed without an initial exam, with a follow-up exam for permanent placement.

Rule 10: Eligible Lists

- Provides increased flexibility in the amount of time that an eligible list is able to be used for hiring.

Rule 11: Certification and Appointment

- Replaces a predetermined, fixed banding of candidates with flexible groupings.
- Replaces the “rule of 5” that is used to limit the number of candidates a hiring manager can consider for hire, with a more flexible rule that reflects the number of applicants on the list, guaranteeing that at least 20% of candidates are reachable (or 10 candidates, whichever is greater).
- Allows for candidates to submit appeals related to selective certification lists.
- Removes archaic (and possibly illegal) discriminatory language related to age.

Current Status

DHR has recently submitted its proposed revisions to these rules to the Chief Executive Office, Employee Relations division. This office has reviewed the changes and provided the recommendations to SEIU and CCU. SEIU has requested a formal meeting and presentation of the proposed rules, which will occur on September 17. Unions’ input will be accepted and reviewed by DHR and CEO-ER for possible inclusion.

Next Steps

About 70% of examinations are conducted by departments under delegated authority from DHR. As such, DHR intends to solicit additional input from Departmental HR Managers to ensure that the departmental point-of-view is captured. DHR anticipates that departments will receive these changes positively, as the vast majority of changes reflect concerns that have been voiced by our departmental partners. The changes are designed to reduce bureaucracy and increase the efficiency with which employees can be assessed and hired.

County Counsel will also be asked to review the proposed changes to assess the legality of the changes, as well as any risks that the changes may pose.

Following these reviews, it is DHR’s hope and intent to provide the revised rules to your Board for adoption.

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF HR ARCHITECTURE AND DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Background and Context

The Charter of the County of Los Angeles Section 32 requires that the Director of Personnel administer the Civil Service system for the County of Los Angeles which includes, pursuant to County Code Section 2.09.050, supervision and administration of the following:

1. Recruitment and selection of employees;
2. Human resources community ombudsman;
3. Civil service advocacy;
4. Insurance management, including benefits administration, disability benefits, fiscal management, loss control, and health and safety functions;
5. County-wide human resource programs, including development and implementation of policies and standards, employee appraisal programs, executive development, information systems, legislative analysis and advocacy and training and development;
6. Employee programs, including childcare, county digest and other employee information, employee recognition and employee development.

Pursuant to Civil Service Rule 3.03 the Director of Personnel may delegate his/her authority in operational activities, except where the authority is restricted by the Charter. The objective of the delegation of operational activities to departments is to increase the effectiveness of County programs and services to the public by placing maximum discretion for human resources management, consistent with merit system principles, to operating departments. The delegated functions must be administered in full compliance with merit system principles, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) standards, Civil Service Rules, applicable Federal, State, and County laws, and Department of Human Resources (DHR) policy.

The DHR HR Assessment Program

The DHR Human Resources Assessment Program provides a systematic diagnostic review of Human Resources operations and systems countywide with an emphasis on ensuring operational efficiency.

The HR Assessment Program:

1. Quantitatively evaluates the performance of the delegated Human Resources functions in a way that allows DHR to learn how departments are performing these functions and measures performance related to the execution of human resource functions across the County.
2. Reviews compliance with a myriad of applicable laws, charters, rules, policies, and contract provisions supporting effective human resources management in the County of Los Angeles.
3. Identifies and mitigates legal exposure/risk related to the performance of these delegated human resources functions.

4. Facilitates better Countywide Human Resources operations by identifying best practices, efficiencies, and cost reduction opportunities.
5. Recommends systems improvement and tools that promote effectiveness and efficiency consistent with DHR's stated mission and shares those with all County departments.
6. Provides the necessary information to assist County departments with the implementation of Human Resources operations within their departments.
7. Instills a sense of confidence in management regarding the administration of the Human Resources function, including its preparation for, and ability to meet, potential challenges.

The Assessment Program enables DHR to complete a comprehensive review of all Human Resources practice areas (Examination Administration, List Management, HR Operations, Leave Management, and Performance Management) in all County departments every three years with a consistent rotation of subject practice areas completed annually.

Because of the size of the County of Los Angeles and the number of Departments, the program is built on the cooperative relationship between the Departmental Human Resources Manager (DHRM) in each County department and DHR. The program transforms the traditional DHR audit tools into online surveys and shifts the data gathering emphasis from onsite reviews performed by DHR to online information gathering via surveys performed by departments. This approach is mutually beneficial to departments and DHR because it empowers DHRMs to assess and report on their own operations while simultaneously allowing DHR to gather and analyze an unprecedented amount of relevant information regarding Countywide departmental Human Resources operations.

The program enhances transparency and facilitates a greater attention by departments on human resources operations and the return on investment of these operations.

Assessment Program Recent Results & Next Steps

In 2019 DHR completed the review of the exam administration function in the County and found that County departments demonstrated an average of 93.5% compliance with County policy and best practices. The DHR Human Resources Assessment Program will continue to monitor emerging best practices and integrate relevant findings into future assessments. In addition, immediate next steps include continuing to track the implementation process for the proposed revisions to Civil Service Rules, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11. These changes represent significant steps forward for the County and, once implemented, will be incorporated into future countywide assessments.

Beyond Compliance: Evolutionary Next Steps

Traditionally, DHR's assessments of hiring related processes have focused on certifying that these functions adhere to the relevant County policies and procedures and that all processes are in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local requirements, including those specified in the County charter and in the County's Civil Service Rules.

However, the underlying question of the extent to which the County's assessments systems have a meaningful impact on the quality of hires has only begun to be addressed. In 2018, DHR conducted an extensive study to determine the effectiveness of assessments it uses on a Countywide basis to assess candidates for a wide variety of jobs across nearly all departments. This study was conducted in partnership with DPSS, using a sample of that department's Eligibility Workers. The study determined that test scores on the DHR-administered tests were highly predictive of future job performance for candidates who passed the exam, suggesting that DHR's assessment tools are effective. However, the study did not address how well those who failed the test would have done on the job, as those candidates were ultimately not hired for the position, and as a result, the study paints only a partial picture of the value of DHR's tools.

DHR believes that a thorough study of the front end of the talent acquisition process – efforts that take place far before the examination – is now in order. Workforce planning and recruitment are key steps to the talent acquisition process and were identified during the Hiring Innovation Project as vulnerabilities. It is not clear whether the current architecture of HR organizations and systems are optimized for ensuring that the best, most qualified job candidates are attracted to the county during the recruitment effort. Moreover, it is not clear if the County uses a systemic or consistent process or tools to effectively conduct workforce planning. Effective workforce planning can increase the likelihood that the most needed skill sets are reflected in the job posting at time of application.

DHR recommends an intensive study of the organizational structure of the workforce planning and recruitment functions in line departments, and the ways in which such structures impact hiring quality and retention. Such a study could, among other things, determine whether the roles currently played by departmental HR personnel are appropriate (for example, does the absence of dedicated recruitment staff diminish the quality of candidates who apply to County jobs?). Moreover, a study could produce recommendations for tools that departments may use to effectively plan their workforce needs. It is expected that this study will be completed in the spring of 2021, and we will provide a full report by March 31, 2021.

Finally, DHR will conduct a study regarding the current health of the specific delegated HR functions to ensure that the existing designations are as efficient and effective as possible. This study will include a thorough review of the data collected through the Assessment Program in the last three iterations in order to identify any specific areas of potential concern countywide and analyze whether such areas would warrant changes to existing delegated authority. In addition, DHR will survey and consult with other key stakeholders countywide (e.g., DHRMs, Administrative Deputies, and Chief Deputies) to determine, from the departmental perspective, whether improvements could be obtained through a re-imagining of the delegated authority landscape. Thus, both central and line perspectives will be considered and analyzed in the development of recommendations regarding this critical issue. It is expected that the review will be completed in the spring of 2021 and we will provide a full report by April 30, 2021.