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July 7, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

ENSURING THE INTEGRITY OF THE COUNTY HIRING, ASSESSMENT AND PROMOTION PROCESS (ITEM NO. 3, AGENDA OF MARCH 3, 2015)

On March 3, 2015, the Board directed the Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in coordination with the Director of Personnel and County Counsel, to:

1. Establish Countywide hiring guidelines and procedures that ensure the job candidate evaluation and job promotion process is fair and unbiased, and examination materials are secure. The procedures should include an effective digital, customizable, secure, transparent and cost-effective testing and assessment system that all Los Angeles County departments must use; and

2. Report back in writing in 60 days on implementation of the guidelines and procedures.

The Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with CEO and County Counsel, prepared the attached report that contains a review of current practices, as well as recommendations for the changes in infrastructure, guidelines, and procedures necessary to expedite hiring; expand the use of on-line and computerized testing; and support the County's position as an "employer of choice."

The first portion of this report provides an overview of existing policies and procedures, as well as the plans to ensure they are current and support modern modes of test administration. The second portion of this report provides a summary of the existing status of these tests, along with a vision of how these tests can play a critical role in assessing new hires and promotional candidates throughout the County.

In addition, the document contains a number of recommendations detailing the specific actions needed to implement the vision. These recommendations and strategies form the core of DHR's initiative to improve, modernize, and computerize hiring assessments throughout the County. The recommendations in this document are aimed at recruiting the highest caliber talent, expediting the hiring process to retain candidates and fill vacancies more quickly, improving the testing and hiring experience of candidates, and providing consistency across Departments in how candidates are evaluated.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Lisa M. Garrett, Director of Personnel, at (213) 974-2406.

SAH:JJ:GS
MV:kd

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Human Resources

U:\chron2015\operations\county hiring

Ensuring the Integrity of the County Hiring, Assessment, and Promotion Process

June 2015

Response to AGN No. 27-A

D | H | R

Department of Human Resources
County of Los Angeles

Lisa M. Garrett
Director of Personnel

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Background

In a motion dated March 3, 2015, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in conjunction with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and County Counsel, to establish Countywide hiring guidelines and procedures that ensure the job candidate evaluation and job promotion process is fair and unbiased, and examination materials are secure. The motion further stated that the procedures should include an effective digital, customizable, secure, transparent and cost-effective testing and assessment system that all Los Angeles County departments must use.

The County has several established policies and procedures to ensure that hiring and promotion processes are carried out fairly and securely. In addition, the CEO, in conjunction with DHR, has developed plans to expand DHR's current online testing programs.

These policies, procedures, recommendations and strategies are described in this document, and form the core of the County's initiatives to improve, modernize, and computerize hiring assessments throughout the County.

Current Guidelines and Procedures for Hiring and Test Security

The County's policies require that all examinations uphold the merit system principles and be competitive, job-related, and impartial (PPG 100). A competitive examination consists of one or more parts designed to qualify applicants in terms of their fitness to perform the duties of the class or position (CSR 7.04 & 7.07). Every candidate is given equal opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications under the same conditions and according to the same standards as prescribed in the County's Civil Service Rules (CSR 7.25 & PPG 100).

Based on the CSRs, DHR has developed and makes use of a number of Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines (PPGs) to ensure the effectiveness and consistency of its hiring procedures, and in particular, to ensure that its procedures are job related, fair and unbiased. The PPGs serve as a technical resource for all County human resources staff involved in recruitment and selection activities

As an example, Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines No. 100, Recruitment and Selection Program Administration, describes uniform PPGs for the County's Recruitment and Selection Program. The Recruitment and Selection Program must be in full compliance with merit system standards, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) standards, Civil Service Rules (CSR), State and Federal laws related to employment, Federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (UGESP), and DHR standards and guidelines.

To this end, the County requires that all open competitive, interdepartmental promotional, and departmental promotional (for countywide classes) examination bulletins be reviewed and approved by DHR to ensure the examinations are competitive, job-related, and afford equal opportunity to all applicants (PPG 100). Through this process, DHR ensures that no artificial barriers are created limiting access to job opportunities.

To ensure consistency, fairness and test security, DHR currently develops and administers examinations for large countywide classes and also for sensitive departmental positions such as those related to human resources functions, or management positions with the human resources chain of command, or particularly complex or challenging examinations (PPG 130).

Although DHR has responsibility for the administration of the County's Recruitment and Selection Program, certain recruitment and selection activities have been delegated to line departments and are subject to audit by the Director of Personnel (CSR 3.03 & PPG 180). These activities include identifying, prioritizing, and conducting delegated examinations (excluding master calendar exams and exams for sensitive positions).

Test Security

DHR takes a number of specific measures to ensure that all applicants experience the same testing conditions and are held to the same standard. In particular, test security is of paramount concern to DHR and the County.

Current measures include safeguards for every step in the examination development and administration process. Existing policies and procedures on security-related topics (e.g., PPG 100, 116, and 180) are extensive, and cover topics such as candidate identity verification, seating of candidates, storage and custody of test material, rater orientation and training, and Test Security Agreements.

The County strives to continually improve its implementation of Test Security policies and procedures. As a function of adopting best practices related to test security, as well as through its experience in the administration of tests for high-stakes, mission-critical examinations throughout the County, DHR has implemented several refinements to security-related processes, including:

- Use of Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT). For on-line testing, this technology uses large pools of test questions to construct a nearly unlimited number of test forms that are adjusted to ensure equivalent difficulty, ensuring that each candidate has a unique, but similarly difficult test, thereby reducing the opportunity to cheat. This technology has the added advantage of shortening test times, as the test can quickly "zero in" on the ability of the specific test-taker, therefore requiring fewer test questions to be administered.

- Use of multiple test versions. DHR makes extensive use of numerous versions of many of its tests, particularly when CAT is not available. For tests of cognitive ability, DHR has created multiple different forms, to limit the exposure of test questions, and to deter the possibility of

fraud or cheating. In addition, tests used by the County have used item-randomization, where the order of questions is changed from form to form.

- Storage and delivery. For online tests, only two employees in the County have access to the vendor's library of tests. All computer-administered tests must be ordered and authorized by one of these two employees. Further, no County employee has access to the Vendor's scoring algorithm. Scores are stored by the vendor's cloud-based servers, and transmitted via a secure extranet between the vendor and the County. Going forward, there is testing software available that can be purchased and managed to provide remote testing capability that disables select features and internet use to prevent cheating or external contact. For paper tests, all tests used by DHR are stored in a fully enclosed, locked and barred cell, inside a locked room. No employee is allowed in the room alone. In consultation with DHR, the County has also used secure test delivery services, such as armored trucks to deliver tests for a recent high-profile examination.

- Test Security Agreements. DHR has updated its test security agreements to further strengthen its provisions and provide descriptions of the potential consequences of violation of security policies. In particular, separate agreements for subject matter experts, test-takers, and raters have been developed. These also include nepotism clauses.

- Identity Detection. DHR uses unproctored tests (in which positive-match ID document checking is not possible) only with tests where cheating is far more challenging for candidates. Specifically, DHR's unproctored tests generally use question-types that do not pre-suppose discrete correct and incorrect answers (for example, "I enjoy working closely with other people" on an agree/disagree scale). Moreover, DHR also typically uses a hybrid approach, in which a candidate completes an unproctored first portion, and passing candidates are invited to a second in-person administration. The second administration can be used to verify scores from the unproctored portion.

Ensuring Adherence to Guidelines and Procedures for Hiring and Test Security

DHR has several strategies in place to monitor and support line departments' examination programs:

- In compliance with CSR 3.03, departmental delegated examination programs are subject to periodic audits by DHR staff to verify line departments' adherence to the policies and guidelines. By closely working with Departmental HR Staff, DHR audits the delegated Human Resource functions allowing DHR to learn about how a department implements its testing program and mitigate legal exposure/risk related to exams. Major changes have recently been implemented to expedite these reviews by transforming the traditional DHR audit tools to online delivery.

- Each Department has a dedicated point-of-contact in DHR's Countywide Talent Assessment Division (CTAD) available for 1:1 consultation and support. Departmental HR staff routinely reach out to their designated DHR contact for questions on examination related issues.

- DHR has created and administers an Exam Analyst Training program to all centralized and Departmental examination staff. The program is designed to help departments improve exam outcomes by enhancing the skills of exam analysts. The course was created to provide those who are developing and implementing Civil Service exams with the foundation for proper implementation and execution of exam-related regulations, including relevant CSRs, PPGs, and federal and State laws; and provide practical step-by-step instruction on the major elements of the selection process.

- DHR routinely provides training to Departmental Human Resources Managers (DHRMs) and their staff though regularly scheduled meetings. In addition, multiple communication channels are used by DHR such as monthly recruitment and selection newsletters to DHRMs and in-person 1:1 meetings to support Departmental hiring and accountabilities.

- DHR conducts regularly-scheduled monthly training and information sessions with departmental examination staff to ensure staff members are aware of security best practices, as well as examination policies and procedures. Staff members are updated on any changes to existing policies, as well as provided with in-service trainings of relevant topics, presented by experts in the field, or by DHR's own in-house experts.

In addition, DHR was recently reviewed by the State of California in an audit of HR practices, including hiring and promotion, as applied to a number of County departments. Based upon the assessment of the County's central and departmental HR systems in relationship to the six federal merit standards (Recruitment and Selection, Compensation, Training, Retention, Fair Treatment, and Political Rights and Prohibitions), the State's auditor found that the County was in full compliance. State auditors indicated they were favorably impressed with DHR's policies, procedures, implementation, and documentation, including responses in individual interviews conducted with DHR and County departmental HR staff members. In fact, the State's auditor recognized DHRs job analysis process and documentation as "outstanding" and is going to cite it as a best practice to share with other public agencies.

Expand the Use of Technology in Hiring and Test Security

While the County's extensive existing rules, guidelines, policies, procedures, and practices have, to date, provided effective guidance on examination- and test security-related issues, there are opportunities for significant improvement. In particular, additional steps can be taken to improve the security of testing candidates for employment. Many of these improvements can be realized through the expanded use of computerized and/or online testing. DHR has been highly successful in its introduction of this modality of testing over the last three years (see section below on DHR's current computerized assessment program, including the advantages of this program). As a direct result of this program, DHR has been able to significantly increase the number of candidates tested, automate scoring, generate candidate notices more quickly, reduce paperwork, and critically, improve the security of its tests. Through the

expanded use of this technology, the County can realize improvements in its hiring practices as well as in its ability to ensure the security and integrity of its exams.

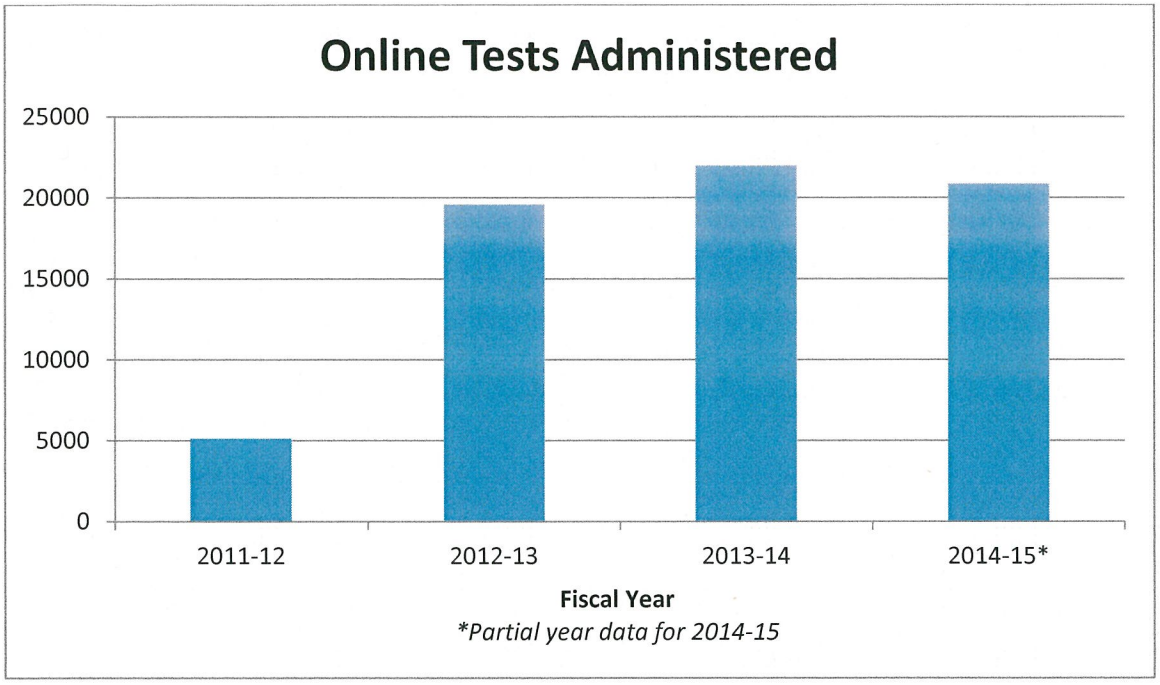
Current Status of Countywide Computerized Assessment Systems

DHR has transformed the way in which public-sector job candidates are assessed for hire. Much of this success has been built on a desire to remove testing barriers for candidates by providing convenience in assessments, including at-home testing (un-proctored) and the ability to transfer a test score to multiple job opportunities. DHR has been able to maximize resources by successfully deploying computerized online testing to replace more traditional methods wherever possible. Our computerized testing systems have led to improvement in the quality of candidates and higher satisfaction of candidates and hiring managers, all while maintaining a high degree of diversity among new hires.

Existing Online Testing Program

DHR currently uses a combination of on-line and paper/pencil test instruments to assess the essential competencies needed for a job. Current paper/pencil tests assess cognitive competencies (skills relevant for the job). Current on-line tests assess mostly non-cognitive competencies (softer skills or traits relevant for the job). Together, these tests are known as "broad-based tests", as they are broadly applicable to a wide variety of classifications throughout the County. Although both the cognitive and non-cognitive sets of competencies are essential to the assessment program, it is DHR's desire to migrate its paper/pencil testing to centralized and/or online administration. This will standardize the County's administration of these tests on an online platform.

DHR's use of online assessments has seen a dramatic increase since its introduction in 2011. DHR has administered on-line tests to over 60,000 job candidates since inception (see chart below). This system, known in DHR as the "Work Styles Assessment" (WSA), is a set of objective, online computer-administered and scored tests designed to assess attributes associated with success in a wide variety of jobs. There are different versions of the WSA, making it customizable for any particular job, ranging from upper management to blue-collar and safety-related jobs.



Advantages of Online Testing

DHR began use of the WSA in 2011 to improve efficiency while improving objectivity and validity of its hiring processes. There are many advantages to this system.

Predictive Power. The effectiveness of the WSA has been well-established by the test's publisher, the Corporate Executive Board (CEB-SHL), one of the world's largest and most respected test publishers. The various versions of the WSA are predictive of a number of important work-related outcomes, such as overall job performance, advancement potential, productivity, teamwork, and leadership.

Moreover, DHR is currently conducting studies to corroborate these results in the County through the expansion of predictive criterion-related validity analyses. These plans include validating the WSA by using test scores and correlating these with critical job-related outcomes and criteria (for example, overall job performance). Strong correlations would suggest that WSA scores are predictive of these outcomes, thereby validating the test's effectiveness.

Quality and Speed. DHR has evidence from several departments regarding the quality of hires and/or the efficiency of test administration directly attributable to use of the WSA. For example, the Department of Health Services estimates that in one month, the department was able to process and identify ten times as many highly qualified Registered Nurse job candidates compared to prior assessment methods, while maintaining the quality of new hires. Nor is the WSA's effectiveness limited to highly skilled and professional jobs. On the contrary, some departments have successfully used versions of the WSA designed for semi-skilled or trades-related jobs. For example, referring to semi-skilled jobs, one department's HR manager said:

We have seen an improved pool of candidates since we incorporated the Work Styles Assessment in to our examination plans. Hiring managers report that a majority of new hires from those lists possess excellent work habits, good attendance, and follow work instructions thoroughly. We are pleased with the results and plan to continue to use the Work Styles Assessment for future examinations.

Time and Cost vs. AP. In addition to these advantages, there have been significant time- and cost-savings from use of the WSA, particularly when compared against the Assessment of Promotability. Departments such as Probation, Beaches and Harbors, Department of Health Services, the Chief Executive Office, Children and Family Services, and Public Social Services, among others, routinely use the WSA for their testing needs and as a replacement for the AP.

On the following page is a brief comparison of the WSA with the AP, the test type most frequently replaced by the WSA.

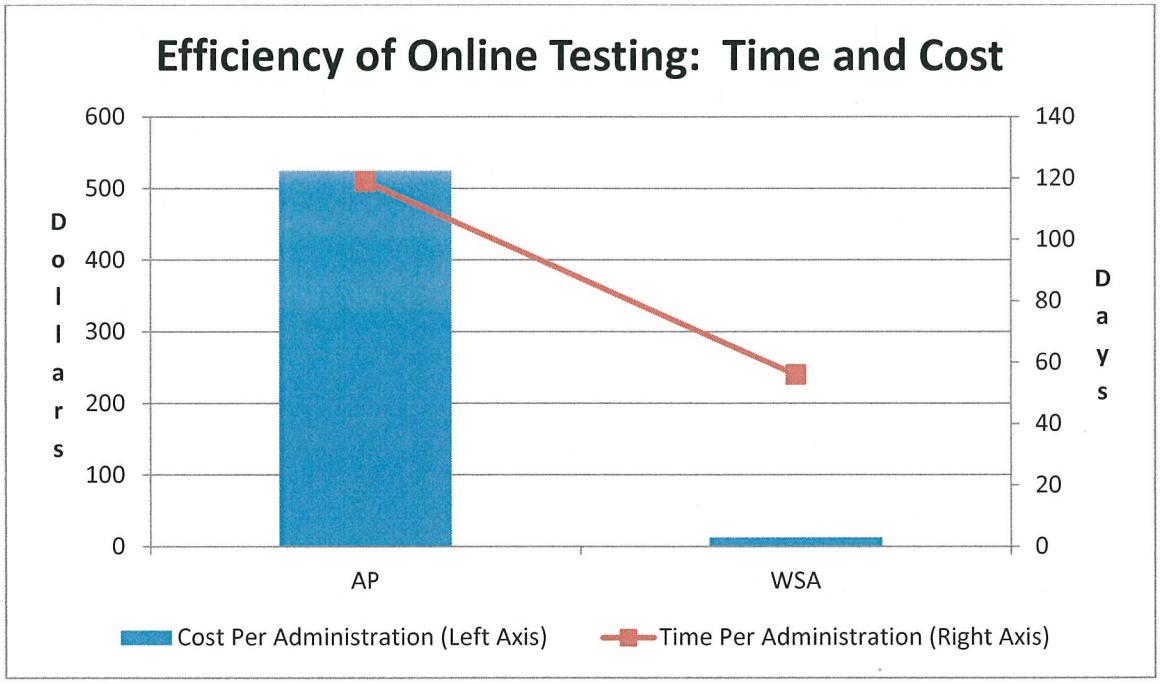
	WSA	AP
Objectivity	• Multiple choice, computer-scored. • Comparison against thousands of test-takers.	• Subjective ratings. • No comparison groups.
Security	• Adaptive test, varies from candidate to candidate. • Online administration, no paper to securely store.	• Known to all test-takers. • Paper copies must be kept.
Validity	• Statistically significant prediction of future performance	• No evidence of predictive power.
Adverse Impact	• Incurs little to no adverse impact.	• Incurs little to no adverse impact.
Appeals	• <1% of all appeals filed in 2013-14.	• 14% of all appeals filed in 2013-14.

Executive Feedback. Information gathered from departmental HR managers supports the advantages of online testing described in the above table. For example, one manager told DHR:

Members of our Executive Team expressed a preference for using the Work Styles Assessment over the Appraisal of Promotability for promotional exams because it allows for a more objective assessment of candidates' competencies.

Rater Feedback. DHR also monitors and measures interview raters' feedback on the quality of candidates being interviewed. Such data suggests that DHR's broad-based written tests are highly successful in identifying and screening candidates to subsequent test parts. Notably, 94% of interview raters were impressed with candidates screened in as a result of DHR's written tests, indicating the effectiveness of these assessments.

DHR plans to determine the quality of hires by augmenting our customer service surveys of hiring managers to include measures of satisfaction with eligibility lists and new employees, thus further establishing validity of selection assessments.



Despite the sharp increase in usage of the WSA across DHR's client departments and the gains in efficiency and candidate quality, there is a need to offer alternatives. As allowed under departments' delegated authority from DHR (PPG 100), many departments express a strong desire to continue to utilize the AP. When carefully structured and monitored, the AP can adequately assess competencies needed on the job. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of departments, reduce the time needed to process/administer APs, and elevate the rating standard, DHR created the comment-less AP. This version of the AP is constructed to limit the administration time, and increase rater consistency and accuracy.

Although there are many advantages to online testing, it may not always be the most effective solution in every situation, depending on departmental requirements, candidate volume, timeframes, and specific assessment competencies, among other factors. DHR aims to be flexible in accommodating departmental needs, ranging from broad-based online testing, to the comment-less AP as a potential alternative. However, it is DHR's intention to take advantage of the various benefits offered by online testing wherever feasible, and to remain committed to working directly with departments to engage in a more consistent application of online testing.

Existing Testing Facilities

DHR currently uses a makeshift combination of ad hoc testing facilities including our own testing facilities in DHR-CTAD (limited to 50 workstations), testing sites on loan from other departments (capacity ranges from 22 to 40 workstations) and rental of large testing sites such as the Los Angeles and

Pasadena Convention Centers (approximately 250 workstations) for larger online assessments. This requires extensive coordination between departmental/venue and DHR-CTAD staff to schedule availability of locations, as well as significant rental costs.

With the support of the CEO, DHR has been able to efficiently test approximately 20,000 candidates through the rental of these temporary facilities. The use of the facilities has allowed for fewer examination administrations, increased test security and ultimately expedited hiring. Without the facilities, an additional 200 days of testing over two fiscal years (13/14 & 14/15) would have been required at our existing facilities.

In order to fully execute the vision of online testing for all classifications throughout the County, a testing facility with a capacity to simultaneously host a large number of candidates will be needed. This is an imperative for a County of our size and complexity. Without such a facility, the vision, as currently conceptualized, cannot be fully implemented. Examples of previous exams benefitting from the use of a large facility are provided below:

EXAM	Number of Candidates to Test	Actual # of Written Test Admins in Lrg. Testing Facility	Actual # of Adminstration Days	Number of Test Admins Expected W/O Large Testing Facility *	Number of Administration Days Expected W/O Large Testing Facility*	Administration Days Saved **
Fire Fighter Trainee* **	5300	2	2	88	88	86
Clerical Series	3300	11	6	60	30	24
Child Support Officer	2700	10	5	49	25	20
Eligibility Worker I	1885	7	4	35	18	14
Welfare Fraud Investigator Trainee	1800	7	4	33	17	13
Eligibility Worker II	1643	7	4	30	15	11
Senior Clerical Series	1380	5	3	25	13	10
ASM I/II	1250	5	3	23	12	9
Children's Social Worker Trainee	1200	4	2	22	11	9
Grounds Maintenance Worker	1000	4	2	18	9	7
Children's Social Worker	550	2	1	10	5	4
Information Technology Technical Support Asst.	550	2	1	10	5	4

* *The number of candidates invited per session varies based on historical attendance rates for the classification.*

** *Administration Days Saved = # of Administration Days Saved W/O Large Testing Facility minus (-) the Actual # of Administration Days.*

*** *Fire Fighter Trainee exam given at Pomona Fairplex over a two day period. Only one administration per day.*

Although the time to administer exams is significantly reduced through the use of large testing facilities, the rental fees are costly, availability is limited, and a significant amount of County resources are

required to set-up and break-down equipment multiple times. Computerized testing in a rented facility costs the County approximately $5,000-6,000 *per day* in rental fees and Internal Service Department (ISD) support.

Note that many of the tests in these large test facilities were administered specifically to help departments meet critical hiring needs. The expansion of online testing to departments can be built on this success, with departments making use of large testing facilities alongside DHR's regularly-administered centralized examinations.

Vision and Recommendations for a Countywide Digital, Secure, Transparent, and Cost-Effective Assessment System

DHR has a forward-looking vision for ensuring the integrity of the County's recruitment and selection process while decreasing the time to hire and providing access to all job seekers. This vision includes the expansion of a digital on-line testing and assessment system that will sustain the County's leadership among public Agencies in the use of cutting-edge technology for hiring and promoting personnel.

DHR's vision for the future includes sustaining the County as an "employer of choice" by developing a comprehensive, streamlined process for introducing both internal and external candidates to a variety of exciting employment opportunities. From entry-level to executive management positions, candidates will take on-line assessments designed to assess the competencies associated with success in the job. Candidates may also be evaluated using cutting-edge video technology for virtual interviews, designed to measure competencies that require in-person assessment, above-and-beyond online testing. The overall goal is to implement an effective digital, customizable, secure, transparent, and cost-effective assessment system for job applicants throughout the County, regardless of department or classification.

The hiring process will be further refined and improved through the use of video technology and job fairs. Both candidates and hiring authorities will be able to minimize time scheduling and appearing for in-person interviews. For example, if several departments wish to share a list, they will be able to coordinate hiring efforts by inviting candidates eligible for hire to participate in interviews that can be shared electronically.

Several core recommendations are made below, along with suggested actions for implementation. Execution of these recommendations would occur in stages, beginning with an assessment of the resources required (see separate section below). It is also expected that one or more departments would serve as "pilot testbeds", so that the implementation plan can be evaluated and adjusted as necessary before being rolled out to additional departments.

Recommendations and Actions

DHR has a history of innovative approaches in its use of assessment systems for hiring and promotion, including broad-based testing, and comment-less selection tools. With our most recent accomplishment of delivering results through online testing, we are ready to replicate this success throughout the County on a wide-scale basis.

Combined with a new state-of-the-art applicant tracking system, our cutting-edge vision for online testing ensures that the County will use the most efficient and cost-effective testing services available, while maintaining high standards of validity and compliance. DHR is developing specific processes and procedures in order to ensure superior execution.

However, in order to continue enhancing and extending online assessment opportunities throughout the County, critical infrastructure needs must be met. This complex endeavor will require extensive investment of time, staff, and financial resources, along with coordination between multiple departments, to ensure successful implementation of the envisioned assessment system.

Below are our recommendations for achieving this Vision, broadly categorized by the lifecycle of exams: setting the stage, ensuring the right people and facilities are in place, and ensuring we engage our candidates. Naturally, implementation of these recommendations will include robust evaluation components, including a pilot program, allowing for identification of best practices and executing any required adjustments.

Set the Stage for Success

Recommendation: Speed up the Hiring Process by Expanding Computerized Testing

Action: The County can endorse the use of one or more un-proctored, on-line baseline assessment(s) for use on a Countywide basis for all job seekers. All job seekers would take one such assessment, regardless of whether the examination is Department-specific or Countywide. Such tests would assess basic competencies expected of all employees, and would likely be based on a universal set of organizational values, such as conscientiousness, achievement orientation, and ethics.

Such computerized assessments would be intended as an initial screen, and would be administered by DHR. Subsequent screening would be administered either by DHR (for exams that cross departmental lines, or for particularly complex or sensitive exams), or by departments (for department-specific classifications where local control over the exam is critical). Departments would continue to exercise their delegated examination authority, as provided by DHR, over the examinations they wish.

Some departments may wish to continue to utilize traditional paper/pencil tests, particularly when online testing is not practical. Such tests are likely to be narrowly focused on competencies specific to an occupation/classification in a department (e.g. knowledge of toxicology for Agricultural Commission).

Additionally, there are some unique circumstances that favor the use of paper/pencil tests, such as when extremely large numbers of candidates must take an examination at the same time (e.g. Fire Fighter Trainee). In those cases, it is impractical to house and support thousands of computers in one location. Such tests are unusual, and we do not anticipate that they would cause any significant slowdowns relative to expanding online testing.

DHR currently conducts exams for 108 classifications that cross departmental lines throughout the County. To introduce online testing more broadly, this "master calendar" of examinations can be expanded to include more classifications, thereby reaching more candidates in more exams. As described above, these classifications would require job analytic work to ensure the job-relatedness, validity, and defensibility of the online assessments.

DHR will work with its vendor to identify additional assessments that are likely to be effective in identifying the most promising candidates for a variety of classifications. Fortunately, our current agreement enables DHR to have access to the vendor's entire library of assessments. The current vendor, CEB-SHL, is one of the world's largest publishers of employment tests. Therefore, the County will not realize an increase in cost of using on-line test content. The only contingency with respect to this service is ensuring the continuation of our annual subscription with this vendor. Should the County choose to supplement this library of tests using assessments from other vendors, this would be at an additional cost.

Resources Required: Larger candidate volume dictates and demands use of expanded facilities for assessment. Current DHR facilities with only 50 PC stations is inadequate and will not support the future vision. Exams for our current 108 master calendar items, along with examinations for about 100 additional classifications, necessitate scheduling months in advance. Should these centralized examinations be expanded, a long-term or permanent facility with a minimum of 300 workstations will be required.

Regarding establishing job relatedness and validity of our tests, this is currently limited only to those examinations for which DHR is responsible. In order to introduce online testing for additional Countywide classifications, extensive job analytic work is likely to be required, and as a result, additional workforce resources will be necessary.

Recommendation: Establish guidelines on computerized and online testing and implement on-line test security safeguards.

As the science of assessing candidates has evolved, the County's regulations are in need of review and revision, particularly given the rapid expansion of computerized online test administration. Online testing brings unique challenges regarding test security. Although online testing has many advantages over traditional testing (e.g., decreased waste, ease of administration, more modern image for the County, etc.), proactive efforts are required to prevent test content from being compromised.

Action: DHR is currently partnering with County Counsel, DHRMs and DHR's Departmental Chief Information Officer to conduct an internal review of the Department's test security guidelines and

procedures. This project includes a review of best practices and recommendations for changes due to the advent of the robust on-line and broad-based testing program.

The advent of electronic testing dictates that security protocols must consider:

- Storage and custody of test material (paper and electronic)
- Chain-of-custody of electronic files
- Encryption of electronic files
- Processing of scores
- Rater orientation/training for video interview technology
- Security profiles for applicant tracking system software users

Action: DHR will implement several safeguards to take advantage of some of the unique characteristics of online testing to enhance security far beyond what would be possible with traditional paper and pencil tests. Some such steps include:

Single Use Links. These are individualized for every test-taker. This measure allows for the tracking of a particular test-taker in the event of any testing anomalies.
Resources required: None.

Confirmation Testing. This represents a two-step process of testing candidates in an un-proctored setting, followed by similar items in a proctored setting ensure that candidates have not been deceptive in the unproctored portion.
Resources required: This process requires the use of County facilities, underscoring the importance of facility procurement.

Situational Judgment Testing. These tests provide a hypothetical scenario and ask candidates to choose (or rank) the most appropriate response. Such tests have shown high validity, and are highly idiosyncratic to individual test-takers, thereby increasing security.
Resources required: This type of testing requires test development services, provided either through DHR's Test Research unit or through the use of outside vendors.

Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT). This type of testing utilizes large item banks, where candidates are "routed" through the item bank in a manner that is commensurate with their standing on the ability being tested. It generally results in each test-taker getting a unique, individualized test, tailored to their ability.
Resources required: None, if using tests available through a vendor's library that are CAT-enabled. If such tests are developed in-house, test development staff and IT programmers would be required.

Get the Right Place and the Right People

Recommendation: Procure Long-Term Testing Facilities

Current facilities are inadequate for the anticipated volume of candidates expected with the rollout of online examinations for all Countywide classifications.

To increase efficiency, cost-, and time-savings moving forward, DHR must obtain a dedicated testing facility with 300 (or more) workstations to administer all of our assessments including online and more traditional tests. A dedicated testing facility capable of administering online assessments will not only increase the cost effectiveness of administering our proctored exams, it would also increase security of assessments though electronic localized control of the process and materials.

Action: The CEO approved the use of a "proctor registry", enabling DHR to flexibly assign the appropriate amount of staff on any given day, commensurate with testing demand. The budget for these items may need to increase as all employees are part-time and limited on the number of hours that can be worked.

Action: A suitable facility must be found to accommodate 300 computerized testing stations. Although DHR currently has some "brick" computers for use at its rented large-scale testing facilities, these are near the end of their useful lifespans, and would need to be replaced and supplemented with modern testing-station equipment.

Recommendation: Communicate & Train

In support of the Board Motion, DHR will communicate with departments that hiring assessments will likely make greater use of technology. Departments are already familiar with DHR's extensive use of computer-based assessments for "master calendar" exams (tests for classifications spanning multiple departments) from which nearly all departments hire personnel. Communications to departments will emphasize that the benefits realized through technology on these exams can also be leveraged at the department level for localized exams.

As part of this communication effort, DHR will develop and implement a variety of training programs. Such training programs will target candidates (to familiarize them with online testing, as well as resources that are available to assist in test preparation), hiring managers (to describe the process for converting exam plans from traditional assessments to online ones, or to explain the process of using video interviews for hiring purposes), and for targeted test types (for example, to explain the video interviewing process for candidates and for raters).

Training will also need to be provided to staff members responsible for managing and administering new examination processes.

Action: DHR will enlist the participation of its Organization and Employee Development (OED) division to facilitate these training initiatives. Any large-scale testing facility procured as part of the expansion of centralized testing would also serve a training center, thereby providing the County with greater value and use for its facilities.

Recommendation: Realign Staff.

It is likely that staff will need to be added in order to ensure that a program of standardized online Countywide assessments can be implemented. Technical staff will be required to conduct job analyses, administer assessments, manage scoring and transfer of scores, develop online versions of existing paper/pencil tests, as well as communicate with candidates. Although DHR currently manages its online testing program with existing staff, employees from line departments are frequently asked to assist in large-scale online assessments. For the envisioned assessment system, with a permanent testing facility and constant large, ongoing online assessments, additional staff will be required (either through new hiring or through the transfer of line-department staff members).

Action: Use of online testing on a Countywide basis will require more staff than what is currently assigned to such functions. DHR will work with CEO to assess the staffing changes needed to support increased DHR involvement in job analysis, conversion of paper-and-pencil tests for computerized administration, test proctoring and administration, scoring, and candidate communication. DHR may use various sources of staffing, including (1) expanded use of existing departmental staff, and/or (2) new hires. DHR will work with departments to ensure the orderly transition of employees assigned to such functions, and will also post job announcements to ensure staffing is appropriate to support online testing on a Countywide basis.

Engage Our Candidates

Recommendation: Engage passive job seekers

Action: The County is fortunate to be viewed as an employer-of-choice, not only by active job-seekers, but also by current employees who are satisfied with their jobs or are not actively seeking new opportunities. The County should take advantage of such "passive job-seekers" by leveraging our robust on-line testing programs, as well as promoting other innovative ways in which employees can engage in our employment processes.

Any person interested in working for the County (or promoting within the County) will be asked to take an un-proctored (pass/fail), computerized, baseline assessment that can be taken at any time regardless of application status. Individuals will not be required to complete an application for any specific job, they must only indicate their interest in working for or promoting within the County. The candidate may take this assessment at any time (within a specified window), in the comfort of their own home or any other location they wish.

If they are successful, they will be invited to schedule themselves to come into our testing center and take an interest inventory that will provide useful feedback to assist them in selecting a career path. After taking the inventory, an Analyst will contact candidates to provide career assistance including, but not limited to feedback/interpretation of the interest inventory, entry points into County employment (external and internal) and overview of the Civil Service System. Participating in the interest inventory will not be required.

In addition to the interest inventory, individuals can schedule themselves to take on-site, computerized, proctored entry-level, professional or managerial level assessments designed to measure general work related competencies. Scores will be banked for future use in a variety of exams. For executive level positions, the assessment center can provide work simulations and other assessments designed to assess higher level executive leadership skills necessary to be a Manager in the County.

Taken together, these measures will result in each employee having a "bank" of scores that can be used at will by candidates to apply to jobs throughout the County. This will speed the testing and hiring process while offering far greater convenience and flexibility to candidates and departments.

Recommendation: Improve the candidate hiring experience.

Action: Successful candidates eligible for hire typically participate in hiring interviews. Those interviews should be offered in a number of modalities. They can be done in-person, via video, or at an in-person job fair. DHR will make video interviewing technology available to all departments allowing candidates to be interviewed once for several departments, as Hiring Managers are able to access the same video interview. Vacancies for the same classification can occur miles apart. The use of taped or live video interviewing will decrease time to hire by eliminating multiple interviews and scheduling challenges, while significantly improving the candidate experience in terms of time and convenience. The Productivity Investment Board recently approved a $175,000 grant to pilot the use of video interviewing technology. As DHR learns from this pilot, it can begin implementing this technology on an expanded list of examinations and for use in Departmental hiring of eligible candidates. At the same time, candidates will reduce travel expenses and not have to take time away from their current jobs.

Implementation Plan

Implementing the plan described in this document will require extensive coordination, as multiple prongs of the strategy will be pursued simultaneously. As a result, the plan for implementation is not linear. Rather, implementation can move forward on several fronts concurrently, with milestones being achieved across several facets in a concomitant fashion.

The implementation below assumes rapid approval at each stage, to ensure quick and uniform execution of each milestone. The milestones below are general in nature; each milestone is likely to be accomplished through the implementation of various sub-steps. Although each step of the project is listed separately, the non-linear nature of this project suggests that DHR can achieve milestones across various aspects simultaneously.

Major Milestone
Master Calendar Expansion
• Identify classifications shared across multiple departments not part of current master calendar
• Contact affected departments for buy-in and communicate plan
• Conduct job analyses of affected classifications. Develop exam plans.
New Testing Facility
• Identify and evaluate potential venues
• Identify, order and install necessary equipment and ancillary items
• Transition from Wilshire facility to new facility
Departmental Communications
• Present plan to DHRMs and/or Department Heads
• Develop outreach and communication plan for existing employees and the public.
Pilot Program
• Identify Participating Pilot Departments.
• Develop and implement communication and advertising strategy on new testing process, aimed at employees and the public.
• Accept drop-in and scheduled candidates based on scheduling
• Evaluate and make adjustments
Countywide Rollout
• Begin rollout to selected additional departments.
• Expand rollout as dictated by department demand and facility availability

Conclusion

The Department of Human Resources is very pleased and honored to be given the opportunity to respond to this motion. The innovative work we have done over the past few years has laid a good foundation to move the County forward so we may continue to be an employer-of-choice. We look forward to your Board's feedback on our recommendations and vision for ensuring the integrity of the County hiring, assessment and promotion process.