



To: THE HONORABLE PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE	August 13, 2019
REFERENCE: Controller's Report - Modernizing Recruitment and Hiring in Los Angeles	COUNCIL FILE: 18-0696
SUBJECT: <b>PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSES TO THE CONTROLLER'S REPORT RELATIVE TO ITS RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council receive and file this report.

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 29, 2018, the Personnel and Animal Welfare (PAW) Committee considered a July 25, 2018 City Controller report relative to modernizing the City's hiring process and related matters (CF 18-0696). After consideration, the Committee moved to continue this matter pending receipt of further reporting in response to recommendations contained in Appendix I of the Controller's report. The following are the Personnel Department's responses to the PAW Committee's requests for report-backs relative to the recommendations in the Controller's Report.

**DISCUSSION:**

It should be noted that all initiatives, projects, and programs using any type of system or software either developed and housed internally, through a vendor, or a third party must meet all City security requirements including protocols related to the access of sensitive information and ownership of data.

*FIRST PRIORITY*

**1. OPTIONS TO EXPEDITE THE OVERALL CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION PROCESS**

The Personnel Department is committed to modernizing and expediting the City's hiring process in many ways. The following describes our work and accomplishments in this area:

**Online Testing** - The Personnel Department has developed the Anytime, Anywhere Testing process to administer online multiple-choice tests that are remotely proctored. After the initial pilot, the Personnel Department received funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018/19 to expand the use of this test method to 16,000 tests. The Anytime, Anywhere Testing process aims to improve the candidate experience and provide a wider reach of the most qualified candidates without the limitations of geography. It also supports equity by allowing candidates to take a test at a place and time convenient to them. This is an innovative testing process that takes full advantage of current technology and will allow the Personnel Department to test the most qualified candidates across the country.

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This approach will allow the City to expand its recruitment efforts and improve the candidate experience. In addition, Anytime, Anywhere Testing is a direct response in addressing the current resource limitations faced by the Personnel Department. Specifically, the amount of candidates that can be tested on a given month through a paper/pencil multiple-choice test is limited based on current facility resources and as a result, testing may be delayed until resources become available. Having candidates tested and proctored online from a remote site will directly address this issue.

Online testing has been expanded to other types of tests. Unproctored online advisory essays and training and experience questionnaires have been administered as part of the application process or as a separate test part. Administering tests in this way have saved time and resources in moving the most qualified candidates forward in the selection process.

**Express Testing Model** - The Personnel Department has recently implemented the Express Testing Model as a means to expedite the testing process for City job classifications critical to the Mayor's initiatives and those that are in high demand. Examinations under this model are administered on an intermittent continuous basis, with job bulletins posted on a continuous basis showing the different application filing periods. The principle behind the Express Testing Model is test more frequently (e.g., bi-monthly, quarterly, or annually) under one job bulletin and front loading the traditional steps involved in bulletin and examination development during the first test administration, thereby minimizing the work involved during subsequent test administrations. This approach is aimed at establishing eligible lists approximately 50% quicker for subsequent administrations of the examination. With feedback received from various City departments, the Personnel Department has identified 43 job classifications which best fit the Express Testing Model criteria of: frequently requested, serve a primary function, provide critical support, associated with a major City program, identified through succession planning, and commonly used across City departments. The 43 job classifications deemed critical vary and include job classifications in the clerical, professional, technical, skilled craft, and public safety series. This approach to testing will help ensure that there will always be qualified candidates on fresh eligible lists for these critical job classifications. So far, 39 of these job classifications have been incorporated into this testing model, averaging a 75% time reduction in the establishment of eligible lists during subsequent test administrations. The Personnel Department is in the process of adding more job classifications to this testing model to total 50 in the new fiscal year.

**Online Interviews** - The Personnel Department has administered Skype interviews on a regular basis for a wider reach of candidates to test hard-to-fill classifications, such as Division Librarian and Port Pilot. With this success, the Personnel Department is exploring additional technology in this area. Staff has identified RIVS as the preferred vendor for piloting recorded interviews. RIVS is a web-based software for digital written, voice, and video interviews, as well as scheduling tools for live interviews. We are currently piloting recorded interviews for the Medical Assistant exam, with the Environmental Compliance Inspector exam soon to follow. Prior to the pilot, staff tested the software, drafted internal procedures and instructions for candidates, and developed protocols for raters to follow during their evaluation process. So far, this method has been well received by the hiring department, and raters were able to use the new system with ease. The pilot of this software will be expanded to include the entry-level Engineering Associate classifications in which on-campus and special event recruitment are currently conducted. During a calendar year, the Personnel Department supports hundreds of these interviews that are conducted across the country. The Personnel Department believes that this technology to record interviews will allow for more efficiencies in the hiring process, such as only interviewing candidates who have been screened to meet the minimum qualifications, allowing candidates to apply and take their interview anytime and anywhere, and making it more convenient for raters to evaluate the recorded interviews that have been lined up for them. With this new technology, the selection process will be more streamlined and less burdensome for candidates and raters.

**On-Campus/Special Event Recruitment** - For classifications conducive to on-campus or special event recruitment, the Personnel Department has been supportive in the operating departments' efforts. An on-campus recruitment involves recruiting, onsite screening, and conducting civil service interviews for qualified candidates at local universities and colleges. This expedited selection process is used to stay ahead of competitive employers in offering jobs more quickly to highly sought after candidates. Departments work

closely with university staff to recruit candidates and schedule interviews held primarily to coincide with pending graduation dates. A special event recruitment involves coordinating and conducting civil service interviews at professional or national conferences. This type of recruitment is very labor intensive and requires special training of departmental proctors and raters. The Personnel Department trains departmental proctors to review applications and associated supporting documents to ensure candidates meet the minimum qualifications to proceed in the selection process, as well as to protect the security of test material. The Personnel Department also trains raters on the use of test questions, rating criteria, proper documentation of their evaluations, and testing protocols. These trainings of proctors and raters are conducted at least twice a year or upon the request of the hiring department.

**Subject Matter Experts** - Additionally, the Personnel Department currently works with user departments for all classifications in the selection process, including the development of test content, rating criteria, and candidate evaluation. Department representatives serve as subject matter experts (SMEs) to determine the critical knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for job performance and the factors for examination. This is especially important for technical classifications with job knowledge areas that are abstract or unique. Working with SMEs ensures the job-relatedness and legal defensibility of the examination process.

**Meeting Goals** - As the Personnel Department is expanding its innovative approaches to testing, establishing eligible lists at a faster pace, and opening more exams to meet hiring needs, the workload for each exam analyst continues to be higher than manageable. Because the workload demand has always outpaced the number of exams that an exam analyst should carry, we are unable to meet our goal of completing 90% of exams within 150 days or less. Although more eligible lists have been established with each passing year which is indicative of the increased workload (i.e., 383 in FY 2016/17, 483 in FY 2017/18, and 589 in FY 2018/19), we are currently only completing 73% of these exams in 150 days or less. Thanks to Council action, we have received additional staffing resources in the new fiscal year (one Senior Personnel Analyst and three Personnel Analysts) to bring down the workload of each exam analyst and to more adequately support application review and candidate processing (5 Administrative Clerks) in order to reach our 90% goal and maintain the pace of exam demands.

## **2. PATHWAY FOR EXPERIENCED EXEMPT AND PART-TIME CITY EMPLOYEES**

The Personnel Department is committed to creating opportunities for experienced, exempt, and part-time employees as follows:

**Revisions to Minimum Requirements for Civil Service Examinations** - The City Charter requires that appointments and promotions to civil service positions be based on merit and fitness, as demonstrated by competitive examination. The purpose of merit-based hiring is to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the City's workforce and to guard against political favoritism. To meet this Charter objective, experienced exempt and part-time City employees are encouraged to apply for all civil service positions for which they meet the requirements. To fully support exempt and part-time employees in their efforts to obtain full-time civil service jobs, the Personnel Department will continue to pursue possible revisions to existing requirements and hiring processes to increase access to civil service positions within the merit-based hiring system established by the City Charter.

The City's Civil Service system ensures that all individuals are offered a fair and impartial opportunity to compete for civil service jobs in the City. As part of this system, all individuals must participate in a competitive process, which includes taking and successfully completing examination(s). The examinations are designed to ensure candidates meet the critical competencies required by the classifications sought as well as meet the legal requirements set forth by the Federal Uniform Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures. Although many of the individuals employed by the City on an exempt and part-time basis are experienced and have demonstrated the ability to successfully perform the duties of their current positions, the selection processes used to hire these individuals into the civil service exempt City jobs are not necessarily subjected to the same stringent documentation and review requirements as civil service positions. As-needed and exempt hiring decisions are made at the departmental level, with each City department utilizing custom criteria

and selection processes in hiring for such positions. The Personnel Department does not manage the exempt hiring processes and thus would be unable to assist in the defense of those selection processes if legally challenged. However, in conjunction with proposed features associated with the Human Resources and Payroll System (HRP) that is to be developed in the near future, the Personnel Department will seek to take a proactive approach towards notifying Exempt and Part-time employees of future examinations for which they may qualify for. This will help ensure that these employees will not miss employment opportunities for which they may qualify for throughout the various City departments.

The option of providing an “exempt/part-time” avenue to securing a civil service job with the City was discussed as part of the Targeted Local Hire Program (TLH). The TLH Working Group (WG), which consists of City management representatives and City Coalition union members and chaired by Jackie Goldberg, as requested by Council, designed the TLH program and specifically discussed this option. It was essential to the WG that the TLH referral process be objective and accessible, and perceived as such. The WG determined that all TLH applicants should have equal opportunity to access civil service employment with the City. Part of the discussion was that since as-needed and exempt hiring decisions are made at the departmental level, each City department utilizes custom criteria and selection processes for hiring this type of staff. Given this, the WG expressed concern about potential perceptions that if exempt/part-time staff were given preferential treatment in securing civil service employment, that TLH would not be providing full opportunities to all participants.

**Methods in which the TLH program may be enhanced** - The Personnel Department is committed to connecting individuals from under-served communities to full-time entry level civil service careers in the City through the TLH Program. As noted in Council File 18-0600-S53, in order to remove some of the employment barriers faced by members of these under-served communities, the TLH Program does not collect any information related to applicants’ work history or education. Instead, basic job preferences are indicated by applicants. Such job preferences are then used to filter the candidate pool and randomly select individuals for referral to City departments for hiring consideration. The model used by the TLH Program is intended for entry-level City jobs that require no previous work experience or education.

TLH applicants remain in the candidate pool for one year unless they specifically request to be removed or are hired by the City. There are more applicants in the TLH candidate pool than the City can timely employ. Since the program’s inception in February 2017, there have been over 9,356 applicants and 615 hires as of June 30, 2019. As an alternative to directly referring such individuals to non-City employers, the Personnel Department has taken steps to disseminate job announcements and job fair information to the TLH candidate pool via the established electronic notification system when requested by non-City employers. If interested, individuals in the TLH candidate pool can respond directly to the non-City employer or community partner hosting the employment event. These employment opportunities do not remove or limit a candidate’s participation in the TLH Program. This enhancement to the TLH Program has proven to be successful as non-City employers have reported that they have successfully hired individuals from the TLH candidate pool.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CREATING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION, INCLUDING BRANDING, RECRUITMENT, AND OUTREACH**

In past fiscal years, the Personnel Department has not received funding for recruitment staff or any associated recruitment activities. When other staff can be spared from their regular assignments, they have attended job fairs and posted on free online job boards to recruit under-represented groups for certain job classifications. Also, a part-time intern was assigned to assist in general recruitment efforts through social media.

Fortunately in this new fiscal year, the Personnel Department did receive funding resources for recruitment, which include three professional staff (one Senior Personnel Analyst and two Personnel Analysts) and \$100,000 for recruitment activities. With the new dedicated resources, the Personnel Department plans to brand the City as the employer of choice and increase the number and diversity of qualified applicants. Expanded recruitment efforts will include the following:

- **Social Media** - The Personnel Department has relied heavily on social media as a recruiting tool. This effort has resulted in a rapid growth of the City's social media presence. In order to make social media recruitment even more effective, it will be necessary to utilize paid advertisement through the different social media platforms, such as Facebook, in order to expand our reach of posts and yield more applicants.
- **Branding** - Develop a cohesive branding strategy using "Create the Future of LA!" campaign, which includes a specific and consistent look that will be incorporated in all the recruitment strategies.
- **Paid Job Fairs** – Personnel currently attends free job fairs. Incorporating a more expansive presence in job fairs that require a fee will allow the City to have access and recruit top talent.
- **Conference recruiting** - Include attendance to trade conferences to conduct targeted recruitment for jobs that are hard-to-fill or to enhance the quality of applicants for specific industries. This includes advertising job opportunities in conference materials shared with attendees.
- **On-campus college recruiting** - Expand college recruiting efforts by developing a presence in all major campus job fairs. Additionally, hold informational sessions to market employment with the City.
- **Online college recruiting** - The City currently has access to career center job boards for most of the local colleges and universities. Adding more colleges that are in-state and out-state to this list will increase the City's outreach to recent graduates and alumni. The City will continue to use the online recruitment tool "Handshake" to target students and help them match their skill set with City specific careers.
- **Community outreach** - Expand the promotion of City employment by partnering with Council Districts, Neighborhood Councils, and other agencies throughout the City in an effort to increase employment opportunities to Angelenos. A point of contact from the recruitment team will be in constant communication with community stakeholders and provide employment information on a regular basis. In addition, recruitment staff will also be available to attend community events or job fairs to promote employment with the City of Los Angeles. Additionally, the recruitment team will also partner with LAUSD to develop educational programs for elementary, middle school, and high school students and expose students to career opportunities available with the City.

## *SECOND PRIORITY*

### **4. EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE JOB TITLES, JOB CLASSIFICATIONS, AND JOB POSTINGS**

The Personnel Department has received \$100,000 in the new budget for contractual services to facilitate reviewing, modernizing, and updating job titles and class specifications. Until a contract is executed, the Personnel Department may need the temporary services of retired City employees with appropriate expertise. The Personnel Department will begin to work on identifying up to 130 class specifications for this project. The criteria used to determine which class specifications to prioritize will include those that are/have:

- Active job classifications with multiple user departments
- Job classifications open to those outside of City employment
- Archaic or inappropriate job titles which are inconsistent with titles used in the industry or do not reflect the current use of the classification
- Very outdated description of duties, distinguishing features, and/or qualifications which no longer reflective of current classification

Revisions to a class specification require input and collaboration from the hiring department(s) and labor, as well as Civil Service Commission approval. Since changes to the minimum qualifications/requirements or duties statement on the job bulletin are considered marginal changes which normally would not result in a revised class specification, one method that can be incorporated into the Personnel Department's process involves those class specifications that will be fully updated; once these specifications have been updated, any changes to the minimum qualifications/requirements or duties statement on subsequent exam bulletins will be immediately incorporated into the class specification thereby maintaining its currency on an on-going

basis. We will also research best practices by other agencies on additional practical ways in updating required information.

The Personnel Department and the Mayor's Office recently identified the winner of the Kaggle competition, which was aimed at redesigning City job bulletins and notices for Civil Service examinations. Based on the result of the competition, the Personnel Department and the Mayor's Office will work towards improving the readability of job bulletins, root out implicit bias through language analysis, and better define promotional pathways.

## **5. OPTIONS TO SET A CAP ON THE NUMBER OF POINTS FOR SENIORITY IN EXAMINATIONS**

The City Charter provides for seniority credit in promotional examinations. This is a common practice in civil service across agencies where due consideration is given to seniority for candidates who are permanent employees of the participating appointing authority. Candidates earn their seniority based on their tenure with the City and it is considered a benefit granted to them through civil service. Although the City Charter is not specific about a cap for seniority credit, it authorizes the Board of Civil Service Commissioners to establish rules for providing the basis for seniority calculation. The Civil Service Rules for promotional examinations of non-managerial job classifications specify 0.25 points for every year of continuous service in job classifications from which promotion is limited. In practice, only in certain promotional examinations which require special skills do we limit seniority credit calculation to subordinate job classes that candidates usually promote from. For all others, candidates who qualify for an exam will have their seniority credit calculated for all years of City service regardless of job classification.

To change the long established application of promotional seniority credit by setting a cap on the number of seniority points for all non-managerial job classifications would require discussions with labor groups, department representatives, and other stakeholders. Also, capping seniority credit across the board will require a Civil Service Rule change, approval by the Civil Service Commission, as well as a 30-day public notice of the change for those wishing to oppose the action. A less challenging option would be to expand the review of limiting qualifying job classifications which contribute to seniority credit as exams come up. This review will be incorporated into the Personnel Department's process prior to the opening of each new job bulletin.

## **6. DEVELOP A MORE ROBUST ONBOARDING PROCESS TO BETTER SUPPORT AND ENGAGE NEW EMPLOYEES**

**Cornerstone Onboarding Suite** - The Personnel Department recently completed the development of an Onboarding Suite within Cornerstone, the talent management system currently used Citywide. Departments which participated in providing guidance on common onboarding forms, workflows, and/or feedback regarding system requirements included: Aging, Building & Safety, Cultural Affairs, Disability, Finance, GSD, HCIDLA, LACC, Personnel, and PW: Sanitation. The new Onboarding Suite includes welcome videos which feature the Mayor and the Personnel Department's General Manager, incorporation of new employee onboarding forms, an interface between PaySR and Cornerstone to automate the downloading of new hire data, a Cornerstone to PaySR User Guide (a living document with updates as they become available), and the workflow which maps out the steps an employee takes in the system to complete the various tasks required for onboarding. The onboarding content, workflows, and general efficiencies realized in the newly developed Cornerstone Onboarding Suite can either be integrated with, or adopted by, the onboarding functionality provided within the Citywide Human Resources & Payroll (HRP) solution.

The Personnel Department will be the first department to pilot this new Onboarding Suite for its new employees, which may be used by other City departments. The goal for this new fiscal year is to implement this new way of onboarding employees within the entire 23 consolidated departments serviced by the Personnel Department's Liaison Services Group.

## 7. ESTABLISHING/EXPANDING PROGRAMS FOR EMPLOYEES TO ENGAGE EMPLOYEES AND SUPPORT THEIR CAREER PATHS AND GOALS

The Personnel Department has established and developed programs which are helpful to City departments in their efforts to engage and support their employees as follows:

**Supervisor's Toolkit** - A webpage in the Personnel Department's training portal called Supervisor's Toolkit is currently available to supervisors who wish to read up on information or receive online training that would help them in their role as a supervisor. Helpful information and/or training on developing employees, dealing with staff attendance issues, handling medical issues and accommodations, employee recognition, and self-improvement (in areas such as EEO, Reasonable Accommodation, etc.) are available through this webpage.

**Core Supervisory Training** - Another significant accomplishment of the Personnel Department is the implementation of the Core Supervisory Training Program. The purpose of this training is to develop and refine the skills needed to manage/lead employees effectively and to mitigate employer liability. This instructor-led training includes four half-day modules in the following areas: Role of the Supervisor, Constructing Discipline, Handling Grievances, and EEO/Family Leave/Reasonable Accommodations. Since the program's inception in FY 2013/14, over 1,700 supervisors have undergone this training. Because of its popularity, the training has been moved to the Deaton Auditorium to accommodate more seating. The training goal has gone from 270 trained per year to 500.

**Mentorship Program** - With a significant number of employees retiring each year, the Personnel Department understands how crucial it is to prepare our new employees to be empowered and ready for the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead. By piloting two rounds of a mentorship program within the Personnel Department in past years, a Citywide Mentorship Program Guide was recently developed to enable City departments to implement their own Mentorship Program within their department. A checklist, Mentorship Program Tracker with general time-tables and options (which may be modified to meet a department's unique needs), and example emails are helpful information developed to go along with the program guide.

**Citywide Leadership Academy** - A working group in the Personnel Department conducted research on the development of a Citywide Leadership Academy, consisting of both instructor-led and online training components. This hybrid approach and the leadership areas identified were the result of the survey responses received from City departments and information gathered from HR sections on best practices. All known leadership programs Citywide were reviewed and matched with preferences provided by survey respondents, resulting in identifying the Department of Transportation's (DOT) leadership training, developed by a FUSE Corps Fellow, as a model which would work best as a Citywide training program. To fund the development and piloting of this leadership training, the Personnel Department will submit a mid-year budget request, to be followed by a FY 2020/21 budget request for Citywide implementation.

**Professional and Skills Building Training** - Another working group in the Personnel Department focused on developing and implementing professional and skills building training tracks for employees interested in developing their skills or gaining new skills. Staff used Citywide surveys to determine what training courses employees most need and want in order to boost their skills. Free online training resources were identified to begin to address these needs and resources were developed to guide employees to better navigate training resources, in addition to encouraging them to set training goals for themselves and track their progress towards meeting these goals. The working group seeks to encourage employees to take ownership of their own development, while more effectively guiding employees on how to do so in a strategic manner. Staff is currently working to pilot this approach, which will include a marketing/engagement plan inspired by behavioral science concepts, with a small number of departments before launching Citywide.

## **8. INCREASE REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS/UPDATES WITH PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT EMPLOYEES AT ALL STAGES OF THE EXAMINATION AND APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESSES**

The Personnel Department makes every effort to regularly communicate with its applicants during different stages of the civil service examination process. Depending on the types of examinations that are open each year, we receive many thousands of applicants who file their applications with us at any given time. With the conclusion of FY 2018/19, we have received nearly 100,000 applications and over 135,000 in the year prior. The Personnel Department processes applications and responds to appeals in time for testing and will contact applicants by email notification or telephone when issues arise. Personnel are on hand to respond to applicants who call or email regarding questions they may have about their application.

Information about the selection process and test dates are provided in each job bulletin when the examination is announced. Understanding that candidates are anxious about their status in the process, the Personnel Department created the Exam Information Database as a way to better inform and update candidates regarding the status of each examination, including current and future application filing periods, type of examination and testing process, comments regarding exam progress, important upcoming test dates, as well as the name of the exam analyst and their contact information whom candidates may wish to connect with. The Exam Information Database is available to the public on the Personnel Department's website and is updated regularly as information changes regarding each exam. Also, email notifications are distributed to individual candidates during the selection process to notify/remind them of their test dates and status as they progress in the various test parts.

### *LAST PRIORITY*

## **9. CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST (CLA) AND CAO TO REPORT BACK ON ACTIONS REQUIRED TO RENAME THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT AS THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

In accordance with the Council Motion, the CLA/CAO will submit a report regarding the actions required to rename the Personnel Department as the Human Resources Department.

## **10. CAO AND PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT TO REPORT ON OPTIONS TO PROVIDE MORE "CAFETERIA-STYLE BENEFIT PACKAGES THAT EMPLOYEES CAN CUSTOMIZE**

The Personnel Department recently worked with the City's Joint Labor-Management Benefits Committee (JLMBC) to establish an Ad Hoc Plan Design Subcommittee (Subcommittee) to conduct a more fundamental review of the LAwell Program benefit design in consideration of innovations in service offerings and the evolving needs of the City's workforce. The Subcommittee will be meeting in future months to (a) assess the current status of the LAwell Program plan and cafeteria plan menu design; (b) identify best practices in other comparable employer-sponsored programs; and (c) recommend strategies for design improvements consistent with the staffing and administrative resources available to support the LAwell Program.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Personnel Department continues to work diligently to modernize and build more efficiencies in the City's hiring process, increase recruitment efforts, expand employee development efforts, and create alternative pathways to civil service employment. Many areas discussed in this report were at their infant stages during the Controller's review or have been developed since that time. The Personnel Department is committed to incorporating innovation in all aspects of its human resources activities in order to recruit, retain, and build an effective workforce that upholds the tenets of civil service and to proudly serve the Los Angeles community.