



BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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COMPLIANCE OFFICER

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March 14, 2016

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Mary Robinson, Compliance Administrator
Office of the Compliance Administrator
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RE: March 2016 Semi-Annual Report

Dear President Preckwinkle, Inspector General Blanchard and Ms. Robinson:

This is the eighth semi-annual report issued pursuant to the Employment Plan that was filed on March 19, 2012 and includes monitoring activities during the past six months. The compliance program has been in effect for four years and the controls that have been implemented continue to ensure that non-exempt hiring and other employment actions are transparent and free from political influence. This report will be posted on the County's website as required by the Employment Plan.

Supplemental Policies:

In previous reports, I stated that the Offices of the Independent Inspector General and Compliance Administrator assisted me with an audit of disciplinary action of six departments from August 1, 2013 through December 2014. A Summary Report was issued with recommendations on July 20, 2015 and I received a response on November 6, 2015.

I conducted a second disciplinary review of all departments under the Offices of the President for discipline issued per the Supplemental Policies during calendar year 2015. A summary report was issued on February 5, 2016. There was noticeable progress with departments using the appropriate forms. Several departments fully complied with all of the steps outlined in the policy, which was a marked improvement from the initial review noted above. A disciplinary checklist was finalized as noted in the County's response to the initial summary report recommendations. The checklist will be used during training this year to address use of correct forms, internal process flow, documents and timeliness issues.

During this reporting period, Departments submitted five Requests for Reclassification. Two requests were denied and three are pending. Twenty-six Disciplinary Action forms were sent to the Bureau of Human Resources and me. Two Interim Assignment Requests were granted and one interim assignment ended. Two Transfer Requests were granted. One Voluntary Demotion was approved. There were layoffs in seven departments and all documentation and questions were answered by departments through the Bureau of Human Resources.

All related documentation and forms have been forwarded to the Compliance Administrator's Office and the Office of the Independent Inspector General. I will continue to monitor implementation and perform audits of the Supplemental Policies.

Training Status:

For the past several years, online training has been provided to employees on the Employment Plan, Department of Human Rights and Ethics and the Office of the Independent Inspector General. Supervisor/interviewers are required to take an additional module in order to remain certified to conduct interviews. New employees and supervisors continue to be trained in person and thereafter can receive annual training online. During 2015, there were 648 employees trained in person on the Employment Plan and 78 supervisors became certified to interview through in person supervisor/interviewer training. During the same time period, 1,966 employees received annual Employment Plan training online and 340 supervisors completed online supervisor/interviewer training.

Non-compliance with training during calendar years 2014 and 2015 will be addressed below in the Complaint portion of the report.

Postings on Cook County's Website:

Quarterly reports were posted on the County website for the first and second quarters of 2015 as mandated by the Employment Plan. Employment action reports for the remainder of 2015 will be posted soon. The exempt list has regularly been updated online with the names of employees holding exempt positions.

Requests to Hire/Job Descriptions:

The Bureau of Human Resources processed approximately 127 Request to Hire forms during the last six months, of which I reviewed 35. Additionally, I reviewed approximately 40 job descriptions.

Randomizations:

During this monitoring period, 67 randomizations occurred with no issues identified. I only monitored three randomizations as I am provided the pre-randomized and randomized preliminary eligibility lists that I use to review validation steps.

Actively Recruited Positions:

The Actively Recruited Position Hiring Process allows Departments to review applications, without randomizing candidates, and to create interview lists. During this reporting period, I monitored three Application Review Panels from the Public Defender's Office, Bureau of Human Resources and Medical's Examiner's Office. Note that the Public Defender's Office uses this process to fill Assistant Public Defender positions. This process continues to be working well as there are no issues to report.

Validation of Candidates/Interview Lists:

Since the last report, I have reviewed approximately 116 interview lists that the Bureau of Human Resources staff generated after reviewing online applications. I must continue to commend the Bureau of Human Resources team I work with each day. They bring matters to my attention, do not hesitate to ask questions and diligently follow the steps in the Employment Plan. "Dual" validation of technical minimum qualifications occurred on three occasions with assistance from the Bureau of Technology.

Recommendation Letters:

Approximately 81 recommendation letters have been submitted to me and processed with two logged as political contacts and sent to the Office of the Independent Inspector General and Compliance Administrator's Office. Ten letters were non-compliant with the Employment Plan.

Interviews/Selection Meetings Monitored:

During this reporting period, I have monitored some or all interviews for thirteen job postings and attended nine selection meetings. I examined 118 hiring packets to ensure that paperwork processed at the end of a hiring sequence complied with the Employment Plan.

Complaints:

Since the last report, the following five Incident Reports were issued:

Complaint # 15-007—An employee alleged that a co-worker was promoted without posting the job online and that the promotion occurred during his probationary period. Two promotional opportunities were posted for the department and the complainant's co-worker applied, interviewed and was ranked for both promotional opportunities. However, the allegation that the employee was promoted during his probationary period was founded. At the time I received the complaint, the co-worker had satisfactorily served his probationary period. The Bureau of Human Resources and the department were made aware of the timeline that lead to the misstep and ranked lists for departments will be re-reviewed to ensure that promotions do not occur during probationary periods.

Complaint # 15-008—An employee alleged when interviewed for the Toxicologist I vacancy for Posting #00118381, there were two panel members, which was unfounded as the Employment Plan mandates two or more panel members must conduct structured interviews. The employee alleged that a Bureau of Human Resources Analyst was not present at the interviews which was unfounded as a representative from Bureau of Human Resources or the lead panel member can facilitate conducting interviews. The employee also alleged that there was a third panel member and someone else present on the second day of interviews. The interview file revealed that two panel members interviewed all of the candidates in one day and the allegation was unfounded.

Complaint # 16-001 was opened as a result of noncompliance with the annual Employment Plan training requirement in 2015. There were substantially less non-compliant employees compared with 2014. Four employees did not complete the All-Employee online training, one supervisor did not complete the supervisor/interviewer online training and one employee failed to take both online training modules. My recommendation included in person training and some form of discipline. Memos to the departments have been sent regarding these employees. Please note that despite the

technological challenges with the online training, the Bureau of Human Resources staff worked extremely hard to ensure that employees complied with the online training, which is reflected in the low number of employees who were non-compliant in 2015.

Complaint # 16-003—an employee alleged that the nephew of a former Cook County Sheriff was allowed to remain at a facility despite having less seniority than other employees and that the bidding process was not transparent. After reviewing this matter, the work assignment was administered consistent with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and determination by the EEO Officer.

I opened Complaint # 16-004 after a BHR Analyst and the department alleged that an employee outside of the hiring process contacted the BHR Analyst and inquired whether internal candidates were being interviewed at the department. The employee was recently certified as a union representative and, although the employee was neither an applicant nor an authorized participant in the hiring process, I found that there was a technical violation of the Plan. I recommended and conducted training for the employee on permitted and prohibited contacts in the Employment Plan.

Complaint # 15-001 was opened as a result of noncompliance with the annual Employment Plan training requirement in 2014 and I issued an Amended Incident Report on March 3, 2015. The Bureau of Human Resources Report was issued on April 9, 2015. All Employees who did not take the 2014 online training attended face-to-face training for 2015.

On July 26, 2013, I issued an Incident Report for Complaint # 13-005, finding a violation of the Employment Plan with the Office of the Public Defender's intern/volunteer program. The Bureau of Human Resources Report was issued on December 30, 2013. The Employment Plan was amended on July 23, 2015 to use Taleo for the Public Defender's Intern/Volunteer Program. The Program began last fall with four volunteer opportunities posted. Currently, two postings closed and are being monitored. An additional meeting has been scheduled to further guide and discuss reviewing completed submissions for volunteers as this was the first time these postings were validated.

Please note that no Request for Documents were submitted during this reporting period.

Interns/Externs:

Intern/Extern placements outside of general hiring process continue to be monitored. There have been 15 interns placed into positions at the County and, in each instance, the academic institution or non-political organization has submitted the No Political Consideration Certification and has been fully compliant with the process. As stated in previous reports, the number of interns does not include interns who are part of the Internship or Volunteer Program at the Office of the Public Defender; however, a status of the Program has been reported above.

Executive Assistant:

A total of five Executive Assistants were hired during this reporting period. Three Executive Assistant I and two Executive Assistant II positions were filled in compliance with the Employment Plan.

Direct Appointments:

There were no Public Defender Direct Appointments made during this reporting period.

Ineligible for Rehire List:

The Employment Plan was amended to include a section allowing the County to create an Ineligible for Rehire List. The list was finally created during this reporting period and will be updated as necessary. The list includes former employees who are deemed disqualified or ineligible for employment due to reasons listed in the Personnel Rules, a finding related to unlawful political discrimination and/or engagement of prohibited political activity. The Bureau of Human Resources updated its website with a Revised Request for Documents that can be submitted to me for a copy of the list.

A Few Observations:

Departments consistently contact Bureau of Human Resources staff not only to ask questions but to assist with the hiring process. For example, while reviewing an application and resume for an interviewee, the Bureau of Human Resources was informed that the candidate misrepresented that she had obtained a Bachelor's degree in answer to the disqualifying question but indicated that she will graduate with a degree in December 2016. The candidate was not interviewed as a result of the department reviewing materials sent and applying the general hiring steps in the Employment Plan. Department representatives regularly contacted me to discuss conflicts of interest with panel members, such as knowing candidates or previously working with candidates whose names appear on an interview list, and how to move forward in the process.

The Bureau of Human Resources Analysts continue implementing the steps in the Plan by spotting issues, bringing them to my attention and rectifying them as soon as possible. I continue to have access to all Bureau of Human Resources files, data, reports, tracking spreadsheets, etc., and Departments continue to respond to all of my requests for information and documentation.

Conclusion:

The County has implemented the Employment Plan for four years with the continuing goal of substantial compliance. As always, I am appreciative of the efforts of the President's Office, the entire Bureau of Human Resources staff, especially my Administrative Assistant, the Compliance Administrator's Office and the Office of the Independent Inspector General in providing assistance with my monitoring activities.

Sincerely yours,



Letitia Dominici

cc: Laura Lechowicz Felicione, Special Assistant Legal, Office of the President
Velisha L. Haddox, Bureau Chief of Human Resources