



BUREAU OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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March 13, 2015

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Office of the Compliance Administrator
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RE: March 2015 Semi-Annual Report

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

This is the sixth 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 that has been in existence for three years has proven to be an effective tool 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:

The Offices of the Independent Inspector General and the County Auditor have assisted me with monitoring responsibilities of the Supplemental Policies. Specifically, we conducted a joint review of the interpretation and application of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Supplemental Policy regarding Overtime and Compensatory Time. On February 2, 2015, the Summary Report was issued with recommendations and we are awaiting a response.

The Offices of the Independent Inspector General and Compliance Administrator have assisted me with an audit of disciplinary action. A Summary Report will be issued during the next reporting period.

During this reporting period, Departments submitted six requests for Reclassification and three were completed. Forty-nine Disciplinary Action forms were sent to the Bureau of Human Resources and me. One Interim Assignment Request was granted for six months. Four transfer requests were granted.

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 train Departments and monitor implementation of the Supplemental Policies.

Training Status:

The 2014 online Annual Employment Plan Training was not as successful as the previous two years since the Employment Plan was filed and will be addressed later in this report. Last year's training module was designed with annual training requirements for the Department of Human Rights and Ethics and the Office of the Independent Inspector General. Supervisors/interviewers are required to take an additional module in order to remain certified to conduct interviews. Face-to-face training for new employees and supervisor/interviewers is conducted within 90 days of the start or promotion date and those employees who do not have a computer continue to be trained in person. During 2014, approximately 1804 employees were trained online and 661 employees were trained in person.

Recently, two roundtables sessions were held with new Commissioners and staff to discuss the Inspector General's enabling legislation, the Employment Plan and an overview of the Ethics Ordinance.

Please note that the Bureau of Human Resources, Department of Human Rights and Ethics and the Office of the Independent Inspector General have met several times in preparation for the 2015 online training.

Postings on Cook County's Website:

In January 2015, quarterly reports were posted on the County website for the fourth quarter of 2013 through the second quarter of 2014 as mandated by the Employment Plan. I have reviewed employment action reports through December 2014 and anticipate that the additional quarterly reports will be posted soon; however, obtaining the reports each month continues to be a challenge. The Bureau of Human Resources website has consistently been updated to include amendments to the Employment Plan, Supplemental Policies, the exempt list with the names of employees holding exempt positions and exempt job descriptions.

Requests to Hire/Job Descriptions:

The Bureau of Human Resources processed approximately 179 Request to Hire forms during the last six months, of which I reviewed 33. Additionally, I reviewed approximately 20 job descriptions.

Randomizations:

During this monitoring period, 50 randomizations occurred with two minor issues that were identified. For example, an individual submitted two applications and only one will be considered for a position. I only monitored two 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 five Application Review Panels from the

Medical Examiner's Office, Public Defender's Office, Bureau of Human Resources and Enterprise Resource Planning. The Public Defender's Office conducted second interviews and the remaining Departments chose not to exercise that option. The process continues to work well with Departmental participation in the validation process.

Validation of Candidates/Interview Lists:

Since the last report, I have reviewed approximately 101 interview lists that the Bureau of Human Resources staff generated after reviewing online applications. I continue to note that the Bureau of Human Resources staff does an exceptional job with this task and they continue to validate candidates without issue. "Dual" validation of technical minimum qualifications occurred on nine occasions with assistance predominantly from the Bureau of Technology.

Recommendation Letters:

Approximately 123 recommendation letters have been submitted to me and processed with some logged as political contacts and sent to the Office of the Independent Inspector General and Compliance Administrator's Office. Eleven letters were non-compliant with the Employment Plan.

Interviews/Selection Meetings Monitored:

I have monitored some or all interviews for six job postings and attended seven selection meetings. As previously reported, there are candidates who arrive at interviews without required documentation, even though the postings communicate this requirement and Departments remind candidates to bring the required documentation when scheduling interviews. Candidates who do not follow these instructions are appropriately eliminated from further consideration as required in the Employment Plan. During this reporting period, I examined 87 hiring packets to ensure that paperwork processed at the end of a hiring sequence complied with the Employment Plan. When documentation does not contain required information, it is returned to the Department for revisions or to expound on the justification for hiring.

Complaints:

Since the last report, five Incident Reports associated with six complaints were issued.

Complaint # 14-004 was opened to determine whether or not Section V, General Hiring, of the Employment Plan was violated. An internal applicant alleged that he was not given an opportunity to interview for promotional vacancies and stated that a co-worker rode to the interview with interview panel members. I reviewed three applications the internal employee submitted and the steps for general hiring were followed. However, I found that there was non-compliance with the Employment Plan as sharing a ride to an interview is not part of the hiring steps but it is implied that this should never occur. I recommended that all administrative staff involved, panel members and the two internal employees who were interviewed, be retrained on general hiring. I conducted the retraining sessions.

Complaint # 14-005 was opened to determine whether or not Section V, General Hiring, of the Employment Plan was violated. An internal applicant alleged that he was not promoted and that the person hired did not have the required experience for the position. Additionally, he alleged that the hiring was political but admitted that he did not have "any solid facts" to support that statement. I monitored several interviews and the selection meeting for the hiring

sequence, including the interview of the candidate chosen to fill the vacancy, and there was no evidence to support the allegations.

Complaints # 14-006 and # 14-008 were consolidated for investigation since the allegations related to the same posting. One anonymous complainant alleged that he or she was not selected to fill the vacancy, was the most qualified candidate and that the criteria used to disqualify the complainant was subjective. The second complainant alleged that the County employee who was promoted purchased or obtained her degree under false pretenses. As a result of the investigation, there was no evidence to substantiate both complaints regarding this hiring sequence.

Complaint # 14-007 was opened as a result of an applicant who claimed that he applied for numerous positions and never received a call from the County. After reviewing seven applications for which he applied, the investigation revealed that the candidate was sent an email after an interview notifying him that he was not selected for the position. The applicant did not submit completed applications for two postings and withdrew his application for a third posting. The remaining three postings did not allow the applicant to proceed any further in the hiring process as he was placed on randomized lists in accordance with the Employment Plan. There were no violations or noncompliance with the Employment Plan.

I initiated Complaint # 15-001 as a result of noncompliance with the annual Employment Plan training requirement and issued an Amended Incident Report on March 3, 2015. As referenced earlier in this report, the Bureau of Human Resources did not ensure that employees who were required to take the annual online training completed it by year end. I am awaiting a Bureau of Human Resources Report.

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 program. The Bureau of Human Resources Report was issued on December 30, 2013. To date, the parties have had numerous discussions regarding this matter and have been working towards using Taleo for the intern program.

Please note that I have not received a Request for Documents during this reporting period.

Interns/Externs:

Intern/Extern placements outside of general hiring process are closely monitored. There have been 29 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. The number of interns does not include interns who are part of the Internship or Volunteer Program at the Office of the Public Defender. The current process established in 2012 is working well and Departments regularly contact me with questions.

Executive Assistant:

Two Executive Assistant I positions were filled in compliance with the Employment Plan.

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 will include 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 has been working on implementation of the process and the actual list has not been finalized.

A Few Observations:

The structured interview process has been implemented with few issues. The Bureau of Human Resources Analysts provide guidance to those County employees responsible for participating in the hiring process and inform me of concerns and issues that have been minor and rectifiable. Occasionally, the notice requirement for interviews and selections meetings was not provided or did not comply with the minimum 48-hour notice in the Employment Plan; however, the Departments corrected the missteps. There are occasions when neither the Bureau of Human Resources Analyst nor I can attend the interviews and the Departments have shown that they can follow the process by following the hiring steps or contacting us with questions. For example, a panel member called for assistance with a transcript that did not reflect the degree listed in the minimum qualifications for the position. After examination of the document, the Bureau of Human Resources Analyst determined that the degree listed in the application was not the degree awarded to the candidate. The candidate was not interviewed for the position.

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's commitment to transparency in employment actions affecting non-exempt positions continues to be a priority. As always, I am grateful for the efforts of the President's Office, the entire Bureau of Human Resources staff, the Compliance Administrator's Office, the Office of the Independent Inspector General and the County Auditor in providing assistance in my monitoring activities.

Sincerely yours,



Letitia Dominici

cc: Laura Lechowicz Felicione, Special Assistant Legal, Office of the President
Rebecca Strisko, Interim Chief, Bureau of Human Resources