

Date: April 23, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager



From: Joe Ambrosini, Director of Human Resources

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Human Resources Hiring Practices Update**

In 2018, the City Council directed the City Auditor to conduct an audit of the Human Resources Department's practices. Of particular interest to the City Council was the onboarding process and policies for all new employees, including those in elected and appointed offices. This includes, but is not limited to, the orientation process, the medical evaluation process, and the evaluation of an individual's physical and behavioral health, and/or prior medical condition(s).

The audit, which was completed in September 2019, found that the City's onboarding policies and practices were generally adequate, with some positive areas and best practices already in place. The audit also noted there were opportunities for improvement in several areas, including the onboarding and orientation of the City's elected officials. On October 15, 2019, the City Manager and Human Resources Department provided a Management Response and Action Plan to the City Auditor (see [Audit Report](#)). At that time, the Human Resources Department had already begun to implement some of the audit recommendations, including increasing the frequency of New Employee Orientations (NEO) to monthly, and reviewing the pre-employment medical screening process to align with best practices.

At its December 8, 2020 meeting, the City Council, through agenda item [NB-66](#), requested a status update of the Human Resources Department's progress toward the City Auditor's audit recommendations. To date, the Human Resources Department has worked to complete the following action items to further address the City Auditor's recommendations:

1. Hiring Practices

On [March 5, 2019](#), the City Manager provided an update to City Council on the City's efforts to improve the turnaround time for hiring new employees, including dedicated resources with the help of a FUSE fellow who performed an in-depth review of the hiring process; the creation of a fully electronic requisition workflow; shortening internal recruitment timelines; modified step placement exemption; use of "open continuous" Civil Service testing model; release of entire banded lists to departments; use of montage interviews where appropriate; and, creation of unclassified positions for difficult and temporary hard-to-full positions. Additionally, during the course of the past year, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Human Resources Department worked with the Innovation Team to develop a hiring process study plan. Unfortunately, the hiring process study was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Department has plans in place to continue to explore opportunities to improve the hiring process as a core priority of the Department's day-to-day work.

2. Onboarding Practices

To date, the Human Resources Department has developed an Onboarding Policy, Onboarding Checklists (Classified, Unclassified, Seasonal, Part-Time), and an Onboarding Process Overview, which have been peer reviewed and are soon to be implemented. The purpose of the Onboarding Policy is to ensure that all newly hired or re-hired employees are provided with a comprehensive and consistent onboarding experience. A streamlined onboarding and orientation experience will help better prepare the new employees with a clear understanding of timelines, expectations, and opportunities for training and advancement within City of Long Beach. This will also help in improving employee retention by reducing anxiety through increased understanding of expectations and requirements during the onboarding process. Additionally, the Department is continuously looking for opportunities to streamline the onboarding process.

3. Drug Test Policy

The Human Resources Department is in the midst of conducting comparable agency research on best practices regarding drug testing in the public sector to inform recommendations in this area. The Safety Division is currently engaged in a liability risk assessment to identify the operational necessity of drug testing for specific classifications. Upon completion of the assessment, the Department will make pertinent recommendations and policy revisions for peer review by internal subject matter experts and department stakeholders. Once the policy draft is finalized, the Labor Relations Bureau will notice impacted labor associations to complete the required meet and confer process prior to implementation.

4. Tools for Employees/Commissioners/Interns to File Anonymous Harassment Claims

The Human Resources Department, in partnership with the City Attorney's Office, has developed a draft form for anonymous harassment claims, in which implementation requires further research to ensure confidentiality and exclusive access to specific confidential staff and management. The Department has evaluated various options including an informal request for proposals (RFP) for a case management system that would allow anonymous reporting. The RFP was stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, the Department has established a dedicated phone number for filing of complaints, and a dedicated fax to e-mail line, both of which are regularly monitored by management and confidential staff. In addition to these options, employees are able to submit anonymous harassment complaints via physical letters without a return address, via fax, or via e-mail with a pseudo email address. Physical drop boxes have been considered but are not recommended due to the time-sensitive and confidential nature of these types of complaints.

Human Resources Hiring Practices Update

March 30, 2021

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Attached for your reference is an updated Management Response and Action Plan, which addresses each recommendation pertaining to City Manager departments. The Elected Onboarding section will be completed and submitted by the Mayor's Office separately, and we stand ready to assist with the onboarding of elected and appointed employees in any way needed.

If you have any questions, please contact Labor Relations Manager Dana Anderson at (562) 570-6254 or via email at dana.anderson@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

City Manager's Office

Onboarding Policies and Program – updated March 30, 2021

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
<u>Pre-Employment Onboarding</u>						
1	Communicate to City departments and elected offices the general process and criteria used in evaluating a potential employee's Live Scan results and making a hire/no hire decision, while maintaining the confidentiality of the background investigation.	M	Agree	Human Resources Department	The Human Resources Department communicated to the City Departments the City's Live Scan process, criminal history review process and confidentiality requirement through a presentation and questions and answers forum at the Administrative Officer Academy.	August 27, 2019 (Completed)
2	Assess the ongoing relevance and purpose of the pre-employment medical examinations for all employees irrespective of the position being sought including its impact on hiring timelines and results. Make appropriate changes.	M	Agree	City Manager	The City Manager and Human Resources Department is currently reviewing benchmarking and best practices of other cities to ensure that our process is consistent with the industry and exams appropriately administered by classification.	May 1, 2020 (Completed)
<u>Post-Employment Onboarding</u>						
3	Develop a written onboarding policy or guide wherein onboarding roles, responsibilities and expectations are defined and communicated to department managers, administrative officers and other key personnel. The guide should reflect any differences in the onboarding of represented and non-represented employees.	M	Agree	City Manager and Human Resources Department	The City Manager and Human Resources Department will work on drafting an onboarding policy or guide with defined roles and responsibilities. Once completed will be communicated to Department managers, Administrative Officers and key personnel.	October 1, 2021 (In Progress)

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

City Manager's Office

Onboarding Policies and Program – updated March 30, 2021

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
4	Continue the City's new approach of hosting the citywide New Employee Orientation (NEO) monthly at a time and location that accommodates the schedules of all new employee positions and departments to assure that new employees attend within their first few months of employment.	M	Agree	City Manager and Human Resources Department	The City Manager and Human Resources Department has expanded the New Employee Orientation (NEO) to monthly sessions and are now located in a new venue able to accommodate a larger enrollment capacity.	August 12, 2019 (Completed)
5	Develop a feedback process that reports to HR when a new employee attended the NEO and the reasons for any non-attendance within two months of employment.	M	Agree	Human Resources Department	The City Manager and Human Resources Department will work with the LB Coast team on the feasibility of developing a process in the new system to capture this data.	October 1, 2021 (Partially Completed)
6	Develop a policy that would standardize informal performance check-ins within 30/60/90 days of employment to ensure new employees are provided with sufficient feedback.	M	Agree	City Manager and Human Resources Department	The City Manager and Human Resources Department will work with the LB Coast team on the feasibility of developing a process in the new system to capture this data.	October 1, 2021 (Partially Completed)
7	Develop an exit interview policy that would include a standard employee exit survey, determine delivery method, and require that results are provided to HR for trend analysis in order to improve onboarding and employee retention.	M	Agree	City Manager and Human Resources Department	The City Manager and Human Resources Department will work with the LB Coast team on the feasibility of developing a process in the new system to capture this data. Human Resources Department will also explore the feasibility of developing a manual process for an exit survey in the current environment.	Upon LB Coast implementation (Completed)

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

City Manager's Office

Onboarding Policies and Program – updated March 30, 2021

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
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Priority

H – High Priority - The recommendation pertains to a serious or materially significant audit finding or control weakness. Due to the seriousness or significance of the matter, immediate management attention and appropriate corrective action is warranted.

M – Medium Priority - The recommendation pertains to a moderately significant or potentially serious audit finding or control weakness. Reasonably prompt corrective action should be taken by management to address the matter. Recommendation should be implemented no later than six months.

L – Low Priority - The recommendation pertains to an audit finding or control weakness of relatively minor significance or concern. The timing of any corrective action is left to management's discretion.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Mayor's Office

Performance Audit of the City's Employee Onboarding Policies and Program

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Agree or Disagree	Responsible Party	Action Plan / Explanation for Disagreement	Target Date for Implementation
<u>Elected Offices Onboarding</u>						
8	Have City Council adopt policy establishing an official City Council onboarding process and, in consultation with Councilmembers, develop a comprehensive onboarding or orientation program and materials for councilmembers.	M	Agree	Mayor's Office	Within the current fiscal year, the Mayor's Office will work to establish a citywide policy establishing an onboarding process in partnership with the City Council.	October 1, 2021 (Partially Completed)
9	Encourage their new employees to participate in relevant Citywide onboarding activities, such as the New Employee Orientation.	L	N/A	All Elected Offices	All offices are encouraged to send their new employees to the City's orientation.	Ongoing
10	Develop a separate onboarding document guide that is more tailored to Legislative Department at-will employees, providing pertinent information and guidance on various topics, including both requirements and voluntary steps.	M	Agree	Mayor's Office	Within the current fiscal year, the Mayor's Office will work with the California Fair Political Practices Commission to bring information on Public Officials and Employee Rules to the Legislative Department.	October 1, 2021 (Partially Completed)

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