

County of Santa Clara

Employee Services Agency

Human Resources Department

County Government Center, East Wing

70 West Hedding Street, 8th Floor

San Jose, California 95110



DATE: October 30, 2020

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: John P. Mills, Director, Employee Services Agency

SUBJECT: Under advisement from March 10, 2020, Agenda Item No. 27: Report RE: progress on recruitment/hiring process improvement efforts

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John P. Mills
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At the March 10, 2020 meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Supervisors Chavez and Ellenberg requested that Administration provide a report relating to progress on recruitment/hiring process improvement efforts. This memorandum provides the requested information.

Background

Following the Board's referral, the County Executive solicited written feedback on the recruitment/hiring process from Department Heads and executive leadership from across the County. This written feedback provided the basis for a series of Department Head meetings convened by the County Executive through the late spring and early summer, where Department Heads and executive leaders could elaborate on their feedback in conversation with the Employee Services Agency, Human Resources Department (ESA-HR). As an outgrowth of these Department Head meetings, several initiatives and efforts were launched, which are currently underway and described in more detail, below.

Recruitment/Hiring Transformation Strike Teams

"Strike Teams" involving three departments (Behavioral Health Services Department, Social Services Agency, and Technology Services & Solutions Department) were formed, including the Department Head/executive leadership of each department, ESA-HR executive leadership, and County Counsel. These Strike Teams have met weekly since June. The Strike Teams have provided the opportunity for the departments and ESA-HR to identify priorities, develop workplans, and collaboratively problem-solve to address each department's HR-related issues. The Strike Teams have been dynamic learning laboratories for both the departments and ESA-HR. Progress to date from the Strike Teams includes procurement of an online test administration module; a new hire survey to assess candidates' experience of the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding process and identify possible improvements; and mutual education on both HR policies/practices and departmental operational needs.

In addition to these three departmental Strike Teams, a Strike Team was constituted including ESA-HR and County Counsel. This Strike Team is taking a deliberative approach to a comprehensive review of the Merit System Rules and the provisions related to recruitment/hiring

Board of Supervisors: Mike Wasserman, Cindy Chavez, Dave Cortese, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian

County Executive: Jeffrey V. Smith

in the various labor agreements to assess opportunities for additional flexibility relative to interpretation and application.

Departmental “Reset” Meetings

The above-described Strike Team model has been subsequently expanded beyond the three pilot departments to include all County agencies/departments and their corresponding assigned Human Resources staff. These regular “Reset” Meetings are based on the principles of “zero distance” (constant communication, customer “obsession,” and continuous learning). The Strike Teams and the Reset Meetings are characterized by partnership, transparency, psychological safety, and empathy. There is a shared sense of urgency and a shared commitment that everything is on the table (people, processes, technologies, etc.). Solutions identified in Strike Teams and Reset Meetings have the potential to be scalable and benefit the entire County.

Client Satisfaction Survey

As an integral part of this work, ESA-HR released a client satisfaction survey in August 2020 to more than 2,000 respondents, including all those who had subscribed to the ESA-HR Recruitment Dashboard, departmental HR Liaisons, and Department Heads. ESA-HR is using the survey data to inform the work of the Strike Teams, the Departmental Reset Meetings, and for employee development, training, and coaching within ESA-HR. ESA-HR intends to release the client satisfaction survey every six months going forward, to measure ongoing progress of the recruitment/hiring transformation efforts and inform future work in this regard.

Human Resources Training Academies

In addition to the above-described efforts, ESA-HR has also launched a series of training academies for ESA-HR staff and customers. These training academies include the HR Academy for HR Analysts, the HR Liaison Academy for departmental HR Liaisons, and the Hiring Manager Academy for departmental Hiring Managers. The goal of these training academies is to build consistency through best practices and improve the overall customer experience through shared knowledge and transparency.

Conclusion

ESA-HR and operating departments are incredibly interdependent, and all the above initiatives and efforts are revealing and fostering new and innovative ways to collaborate to advance the mission of the County.

c: Miguel Marquez, Chief Operating Officer
James R. Williams, County Counsel
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors