



CITY OF ATLANTA
City Auditor's Office
Amanda Noble, City Auditor
404.330.6750

August 2020

Performance Audit:

Hiring Process

What We Found

The Department of Human Resources streamlined its hiring process, which appears to have reduced the time to fill vacant positions by 35%—falling slightly short of the city's target and the industry benchmark. Data limitations prevent conclusive analysis.

Human Resources streamlined the hiring process by updating policies and procedures, which hadn't been updated since 2008; providing more direction to hiring departments; and reducing the number of manual signatures and the number of approvers required for some forms. However, more comprehensive guidance is needed. Human Resources prepared six reference documents for the new process that contained conflicting guidance on the order of steps. We also recommend that Human Resources require the Department of Finance's budget analysts to validate budgets before filling vacant positions.

Human Resources has controls in place to mitigate the risk of discriminatory hiring practices but could make more use of the system input controls and efficiency measures in the hiring system.

We found inconsistencies in Human Resources' application of federal guidance and city record retention policy. About 30% of our random sample of 75 active and inactive personnel files were missing. Staff told us they did not create some hard copy files during an effort to shift from paper files to digital storage. A backlog was created when staff were asked to move back to paper files. We were therefore unable to confirm that files contained all the legally required hiring documents. Five of the ten vacancy postings we reviewed did not contain all the information required by City Code.

Why We Did This Audit

The Department of Human Resources recently implemented a new hiring process to address departments' concerns with the slow pace of hiring. This audit reviews city hiring processes both before and after the pilot program for clarity, compliance, and efficiency.

What We Recommended

To reduce the risk of hiring delays, errors, and inconsistencies; ensure compliance with regulations; and increase accountability, consistency, and efficiency, the Human Resources Commissioner should:

- streamline hiring policies and procedures into one document
- automate manual forms
- use the Department of Finance to perform vacancy budget validations
- create a quality assurance process for personnel files
- develop a standardized vacancy posting template
- capture all candidate transactions in the hiring system
- establish performance expectations and provide training for staff
- use the industry benchmark's methodology for measuring time to fill
- separate requisition editing and approval
- determine how to prevent, detect, and monitor bypassing and offer changes
- document the city's hiring bonus policy
- improve hiring system clarity

For more information regarding this report, please use the "contact" link on our website at www.atlaudit.org

Management Responses to Audit Recommendations

Summary of Management Responses

Recommendation #1: We recommend that Talent Acquisition continue to work with the consultant to provide one streamlined document and clearer instructions to stakeholders for hiring new employees to reduce the risk of hiring delays, inconsistencies, and errors.

Response & Proposed Action: The Department of Human Resources (DHR) has developed comprehensive written guidance to inform departments on the process for hiring new employees. **Agree**

Timeframe: July 2020

Recommendation #2: To enhance file retention compliance, we recommend that Human Resources' creates a quality assurance process for creating and maintaining personnel files, including a list of which documents are legally required, which need to be maintained separately from the personnel file, and the location of files.

Response & Proposed Action: DHR will reevaluate its current process for ongoing maintenance of personnel files to ensure that all files are in compliance with federal, state, and local record retention mandates, including recommended filing structures. **Agree**

Timeframe: December 2020

Recommendation #3: To reduce hiring delays, errors, and inconsistencies, we recommend that Human Resources provide clearer instructions (department level) for required information to stakeholders.

Response & Proposed Action: DHR has provided training to all departmental hiring stakeholders and will distribute reference documents in coordination with implementation of an ongoing and recurring training program. **Agree**

Timeframe: September 2020

Recommendation #4: To reduce hiring delays and improve accuracy, we recommend that Information Systems add a control in Taleo for hiring managers to confirm that they have all the necessary paperwork prior to submitting for approval.

Response & Proposed Action: Functionality of the configuration is currently being tested by HRIS. **Agree**

Timeframe: August 2020

Recommendation #5:	We recommend that Information Systems document policies for hiring bonuses and update controls in Taleo consistent with this guidance to ensure compliance.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will evaluate and assess the feasibility of the recommendation in alignment with current system capability and codified guidelines for bonus distributions.	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	
Recommendation #6:	To ensure clarity and system functionality, we recommend that Information Systems clearly indicate when candidates should submit the physical task during onboarding.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR has evaluated this recommendation and determined that the system is configured appropriately for applicant notification and vendor confirmation of results. DHR will continue to assess opportunities for clarity of messaging.	Disagree
Timeframe:	N/A	
Recommendation #7:	To increase accountability and accuracy, Human Resources should establish performance expectations for staff in recruiting positions and provide training.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will continue to appropriately evaluate performance expectations of staff to ensure accountability and competency relative to assigned job responsibilities.	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	
Recommendation #8:	We recommend that Human Resources separate duties for requisition editing and approval to reduce the risk of errors.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR has evaluated this recommendation and determined that the current assignment of duties is appropriately aligned with current staffing availability and control oversight designed to mitigate any risks identified for a segregation of duties as part of this recommendation. DHR will continue to assess opportunities for additional control measures.	Disagree
Timeframe:	N/A	
Recommendation #9:	We recommend that Information Systems require that candidates' eSignatures match their last name on their application to ensure accountability.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR has previously completed and implemented this recommendation.	Agree
Timeframe:	January 2019	

Recommendation #10:	We recommend that Talent Acquisition and Information Systems work together to develop a standardized posting template for classified positions in Taleo to ensure that Human Resources follows city code regarding vacant position announcements.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will develop and implement defined templates for classified and unclassified employees to accommodate job postings in Taleo. DHR will continue to evaluate and assess system capability to establish feasibility of functional interfaces for positions postings.	Agree
Timeframe:	June 2021	
Recommendation #11:	We recommend that Information Systems remove the benefits summary page for new hires to improve clarity, based on the recent update.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR has evaluated this recommendation and determined that the information provided to applicants is appropriately aligned with the City's communication strategy for availability of benefits. DHR will continue to assess opportunities for clarity of messaging.	Disagree
Timeframe:	N/A	
Recommendation #12:	To create a reliable and consistent metric, we recommend that Human Resources use the Society for Human Resource Managers' methodology for measuring time to fill positions.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will adopt a time to fill metric which measures the time from posting a requisition until time of offer acceptance by an applicant.	Agree
Timeframe:	October 2020	
Recommendation #13:	To reduce the risk of the Vacancy Review Board approving unauthorized and/or unfunded positions, we recommend Human Resources and AIM work together to automate the request to fill form moving forward for Vacancy Review Board review and approval.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR is currently working with AIM to implement this recommendation.	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	
Recommendation #14:	We recommend that Information Systems make the street address a required field in the candidate application to improve efficiency and reduce hiring delays.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR is currently implementing this recommendation.	Agree
Timeframe:	August 2020	

Recommendation #15:	To ensure that request to fill submittals reflect up-to-date budget analysis, we recommend Human Resources have the Department of Finance budget analysts perform the budget validations to fill all vacant positions.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will develop a process to ensure that the Department of Finance is involved in validating the availability of funding for request to fill submittals.	Agree
Timeframe:	October 2020	
Recommendation #16:	We recommend that Human Resources use the existing automated request to extend offer form and offer letter functionalities within Taleo to improve efficiency and reduce errors.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR is currently in the process of implementing this recommendation.	Agree
Timeframe:	September 2020	
Recommendation #17:	We recommend that recruiters check for duplicate profiles and merge them before extending an offer to improve data integrity.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR is currently in the process of implementing this recommendation.	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	
Recommendation #18:	To improve robustness of reporting and ensure that controls are functioning, we recommend that Human Resources work with departments to capture all candidate transactions within Taleo.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will collaborate with operating departments to ensure policy adherence regarding hiring practices.	Agree
Timeframe:	September 2020	
Recommendation #19:	To increase accuracy, we recommend that recruiters create new requisitions rather than adding new position numbers to existing requisitions.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will evaluate the current requisition process to accomplish the intent of this recommendation, subject to identification and exceptions for specific sub-groups (i.e. seasonal positions).	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	
Recommendation #20:	We recommend that Human Resources Information Systems and Talent Acquisition determine how to prevent, detect, and monitor bypassing and offer changes to reduce the potential system for system access abuse and errors.	
Response & Proposed Action:	DHR will continue to mitigate risks for system access abuse and errors. HRIS will evaluate, assess and mitigate any functional and configurable deficiencies associated with bypassing mandatory functions.	Agree
Timeframe:	December 2020	