



TO: Department Heads
FROM: Mayor Gavin Newsom
DATE: August 15, 2005
RE: Implementation of Civil Service Reform Report Recommendations

In May 2005, Human Resources Director Phil Ginsburg provided me his Department's policy paper on the City's Civil Service System. The report provided a comprehensive overview of our century-old system and numerous recommendations for improvement. While not all of the recommendations will be embraced by either labor or management, the report is a blueprint for a modern and more effective personnel system designed to ensure that San Franciscans continue to receive the highest quality services from their government in the 21st Century.

Our employees are this City's greatest asset and the report has spurred healthy dialogue about the importance of the human resource function in City government and throughout San Francisco. I am pleased that the Board of Supervisors and the Civil Service Commission are holding hearings on this important topic and that many of our labor unions have expressed their support for new ideas as well.

Based on DHR's report, this memorandum summarizes some of my initial priorities as we begin the process of reforming our Civil Service System.

1. Faster Permanent Hiring/ Eliminate Provisional Appointments

In early October, I will be submitting to the Civil Service Commission a package of Rule changes that will accomplish two major reform goals. The first goal is to shorten hiring times for permanent employees from 6-12 months to 60 days. By reducing the time it takes to hire a permanent employee, we will accomplish our second goal – which is, eventually, to eliminate the use of provisional appointments – an inefficient and inequitable temporary hiring process. I will also be announcing changes to our current requisition approval process intended to reduce unnecessary delays in hiring.

I would like our new hiring process to be implemented by early 2006.

2. Upgrade Human Resources Technology

My 2005-06 budget included one-time efficiency grants for many City departments. I am directing the Department of Human Resources to use its grant to implement a new web-based recruitment and hiring program that is quicker, simpler and gives San Francisco residents easier access to City job opportunities. To help ensure equal opportunity and expanded access for all, I am directing the Department of Human Resources to work with the Library to place an employment kiosk in every public library in San Francisco. I would like to see the new system implemented this fiscal year.

My 2005-06 budget also included partial funding to upgrade the City's human resources information management and payroll system. I am directing the Department of Human Resources to work closely with the Controller and the Department of Telecommunication and Information Services to begin work on the upgrade project and to identify additional funding needed to complete the project.

3. Career Development

We do not give our managers and supervisors the tools they need to effectively manage and lead our workforce. Effective immediately, I am directing all City departments under my direction to provide 24 hours (three days) of training – including training in performance planning and appraisals -- to newly hired supervisors and managers within their first six months of employment.

I am directing the Department of Human Resources to provide me with a plan by the end of the fiscal year that would require all newly hired supervisors and managers to complete a core training curriculum upon initial appointment and then to receive ongoing, annual supervisorial and management training.

I am further directing the Director of Human Resources to provide me with a plan by January 1, 2006 to create a “City University” through partnerships with City College, San Francisco State University, the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations and institutions. The goal of our City University should be to ensure San Francisco has the most educated and highly trained local government workforce possible.

4. Performance Planning and Appraisals

A meaningful goal setting and performance evaluation are the cornerstone of a personnel system that values quality and gives employees the direction and feedback they need to do their jobs well and develop professionally. We owe it to our employees and taxpayers who rely on our services to perform this critical management function.

Effective immediately, I am directing all City departments under my direction to ensure performance planning and appraisals are completed annually for every employee. I will ask that these Departments self-certify the percent of performance appraisals completed in time for next year’s proposed budget submissions. I am instructing the Department of Human Resources to make available performance planning and appraisal training as part of its supervisorial and management training curriculum.

I am further directing the Department of Human Resources to provide me with a plan by the end of the fiscal year that will make the City’s performance planning and appraisal program mandatory for all City employees. The plan should include assurances that adequate training is provided; that the planning and appraisal tools we use are effective and efficient; and that the program can be tracked and monitored. I would also like DHR to consider ways to implement a voluntary program for employees to provide feedback to supervisors and managers.

5. Succession Planning/Class Plan Modernization

With 43% of our employees 50 or older, the City must fulfill its responsibility to engage in succession planning. We must also give careful consideration to new recruitment strategies and to modernizing our classification plan (i.e. the specific jobs we do) to create more modern and dynamic definitions of the work we do that is responsive to the changing service needs of our City.

I am directing the Department of Human Resources to work with the Controller and the Retirement System to provide an annual report on the City’s workforce, which incorporates succession planning strategies. I am further directing the Department of Human Resources to begin work on modernizing our

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classification plan. The Department's efforts should be focused on reducing the overall number of job classifications in City government and in making sure minimum job qualifications help us screen in a diverse pool of talented workers and innovative thinkers. I would like an update by the end of the fiscal year on steps the Department has taken.

6. Simplify and Revise Civil Service Rules

There is general consensus that our four volumes of Civil Service Rules need simplification and revision. I am requesting that the President of the Civil Service Commission and the Human Resource Director convene a task force for this purpose. The task force should include representation from the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Human Resources, the City Attorney's Office, operating departments, labor, and outside personnel experts and facilitators. I believe the goal of the task force should be to simplify and update civil service rules, which preserve the Civil Service Commission's responsibility to ensure the integrity of the merit system and also allow the Department of Human Resources to more efficiently adapt policies and procedures to changing legal, financial, technological and service parameters. I recognize that interim rule changes will still be needed to implement civil service reform objectives. I am requesting that the task force conclude its work and present its revisions by January 2007.

These are some first big steps, which I hope will begin the process of modernizing and revitalizing our personnel system. I support many of the other recommendations presented by the Department of Human Resources. Creating lasting improvements in our personnel system will take years, not months. I look forward to working with the Department of Human Resources, the Civil Service Commission, the Board of Supervisors and our employees and their labor unions to create a more inspiring personnel system.

cc: Aaron Peskin, President of the Board of Supervisors
Linda Richardson, President of the Civil Service Commission
Phil Ginsburg, Human Resources Director
Department Personnel Officers
Employee Organizations