

COUNTY OF VENTURA  
MEMORANDUM  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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Date: August 19, 1996

TO: Lin Koester, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Ron Komers, Director / Human Resources *RK*

SUBJECT: 1995-96 Grand Jury Response

Summer Youth Employment Program

The 1995-96 Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint regarding possible favoritism in County hiring practices for temporary summer employment. Many County departments participate in the Summer Youth Employment Training Program which is funded by the Federal Job Training Partnership Act (JPTA), but these youth are not employees of the County. They are screened by an independent contractor (Tomkinson and Associates).

In addition to JPTA-funded jobs, there are also a variety of temporary summer jobs, some of which are filled through various work-study or internship programs, and others for which the departments follow standard procedures. In order to fill these positions, departments utilize existing certification lists. However, due to the timing required, it is the County's policy to allow departments to fill temporary positions with any qualified candidate if a certification list does not already exist.

The Grand Jury made three recommendations in this regard. The first was to bring the Alternative Staffing Office proposal, which was first presented in 1993, back to the Board of Supervisors for their approval. I support this recommendation, as the Alternate Staffing Office and Temporary Help Pool can play a significant role in the County's "PRIDE" welfare reform program. However, the specific policy and procedures require some updating and modification to reflect both welfare reform goals and the changes in the work environment. Human Resources staff members are currently revising the document, and will bring a proposal to the Board in the near future.

The second recommendation is that recruiting and hiring should be the sole responsibility of the Human Resources (HR) Director. Establishment of procedures regarding this area, and oversight of departmental practices, should be the responsibility of the HR Director. However, the actual hiring of staff should be the responsibility of the individual department heads, acting within the established policies and procedures. It is not possible for the HR Director to hire for each vacancy that occurs in the County workforce.

The final recommendation of the Grand Jury in this area was to advertise these recruitments.

In filling a position for two to four months duration, formal advertising for each position is not viewed as a practical or effective use of our limited HR staff or budget. For these reasons, I cannot support this recommendation.

#### Investigation Update: County Management of Computers

The Grand Jury also found the County's response to their prior recommendations regarding computer training to be insufficient in some areas, and made three additional recommendations in this area, as follows:

- 1) The Board should make it a priority to upgrade job-related technical skills of its employees, and provide funds with which to conduct advanced system training for County employees.
- 2) Training related to re-engineering work processes, innovation, the use of technology, and system development should be funded.
- 3) The PC Power program must gain wider recognition among employees.

The Board of Supervisors supported the establishment of our PC Training program, which is now available to all County departments, as a way to upgrade the basic technical computer skills of its employees. However, individual department heads are responsible for the allocation of their limited training budgets. If separate funds were provided for these particular training needs, more employees would be able to take advantage of the available training.

The type of training suggested in the second recommendation has been developed and available locally, since it is offered through the Entrepreneur Academy for County business owners. Courses in re-engineering functions and in applying technological solutions to increase productivity could easily be added to our existing training program for employees. The County has already trained forty (40) of its managers in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) techniques, and I also recommend follow-up and expanded use of these techniques.

The recommendation regarding the PC Power program was unclear. If the reference was in fact related to the group of users who met with ISD to identify user needs, I support continuation and expanded membership of this group. However, the Grand Jury's comment seems to refer to the PC Training Program. This program has been expanded, and an intensive information distribution plan has been developed for this fiscal year to encourage employees to participate.

In summary, the Human Resources Department will present a revised proposal for an Alternative Staffing Pool for administrative review and Board consideration this year. Although recruitment and hiring cannot be the sole responsibility of the Human Resources Director, our department will continue to assure that the County is an equal opportunity employer. In the area of County management of computers, I support expanded training opportunities, and we will continue to offer high quality training classes for employees. At the same time, I recognize that department heads must judiciously allocate their limited training funds.