DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES HIRING PRACTICES INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources Department (HRD) was selected by the Audit, Finance and County Administration Committee for an inquiry of hiring practices.

The Grand Jury received two complaints concerning hiring practices of the Chief Administrative Office. These prompted the committee's interest in conducting an inquiry into the HRD. The focus was to gain knowledge about the hiring and promotion process.

INQUIRY

The HRD, the Chief Deputy Director and the assistant to the Chief Deputy Director were interviewed. We toured HRD and were shown certification lists and were given an explanation of the personnel records system. Three meetings were held interviewing top management personnel and discussing procedures used to select employees for promotion.

FINDINGS

The acting director of HRD provided us with the following personnel documents explaining the selection process:

- Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual
- Management Assistant III Open
- Management Assistant III Transfer
- Management Assistant IV Confidential (Countywide)
- Management Assistant IV Confidential (Transfer)

ELIGIBILITY LISTS

Eligibility lists, comprised of current employees, are drawn from the following:

Classification Reinstatement List: A list of employees demoted due to a reduction in workforce. To remain on a classification reinstatement list, a person must maintain status as a regular county employee.

Agency/Department List: A list of employees in an agency/department qualified by examination for promotion in the agency/department. To remain on an agency/department list, a person must hold status within the county service.

Persons on an agency/department eligibility list who do not currently hold status in the agency/department shall have their names certified for selection only if the regular position is vacant.

Countywide List: A list of employees qualified by examination for promotion in an agency/department. To remain on the countywide list, a person must hold status within the county service.

Reemployment List: A list of each classification of persons eligible for reemployment.

Reinstatement List: A list of each classification of persons eligible for reinstatement.

Open List: A list of those qualified for employment as a result of an open examination. These lists show the level of confidential status for various positions. In addition to the above we received job specifications which are official descriptions of a job classification for:

- Management Assistant I   Confidential
- Management Assistant II   Confidential
- Management Assistant III   Confidential
- Management Assistant IV   Confidential
- Management Assistant I   Non-Confidential
- Management Assistant II   Non-Confidential
- Management Assistant III   Non-Confidential

Job specifications define typical tasks, knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience required for a position. A confidential employee has access to confidential information in employee relations matters. The above lists are used for various stages of hiring and transferring employees. There are nine different union negotiated agreements covering equal level employees.

CONCLUSIONS

The above information may be familiar to the HRD, but is confusing to other personnel, even those who are long time county employees.

The selection process is very complicated. The priority of the eligibility lists is an important factor. Placement of an employee in a confidential position is the prerogative of the selector. A selecting official can choose from any list for a confidential position and may bypass a transfer list.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The HRD should define very clearly the priorities of the eligibility lists as stated in the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual.
- The HRD should clarify that confidentiality status is determined solely at the discretion of the selecting agency.

- The HRD should reveal these little known and vague rules and regulations which may be open to interpretation. Employees may be passed over in the selection process and not understand why.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Human Resources Department