

September 13, 2007

Mr. Barry L. Zimmerman
Director of Human Resources
Hall of Administration
800 South Victoria Avenue, L#1970
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Your response re Grand Jury Report, "Ventura County Employee Recruitment and Promotion"

Thank you for your August 7, 2007 response to the above mentioned Grand Jury report. In your response to Recommendation (R-06 – exit interviews), you state, "We will take this recommendation under advisement."

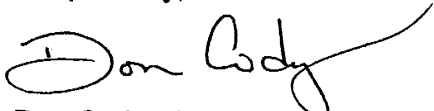
Penal Code §933.05(c) requires that the responding board or official shall report one of the following actions:

- 1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- 2) The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future within a specific time period.
- 3) The recommendation *requires further analysis, with an explanation of the scope and parameters of an analysis or study*. The timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion shall not exceed *six months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury report*. (May 30, 2007)
- 4) The recommendation will not be implemented because the respondent deems it unwarranted or unreasonable, with an explanation.

In accordance with the six month timeframe provided for in PC §933.05(b), the Grand Jury would like to review the completed analysis for recommendation R-06 that is being taken under advisement and may require further study. Based on the May 30, 2007 publication date for the Grand Jury's "Ventura County Employee Recruitment and Promotion" report, the six month date would be approximately November 30, 2007.

It is respectfully requested that a copy of the respective analysis and decision, signed by you as Director of Human Resources, be forwarded to the Grand Jury.

Respectfully,



Don Cody, Ed.D., Foreman
Ventura County 2007-2008 Grand Jury

December 17, 2007

Grand Jury
800 South Victoria Avenue, #3751
Ventura, California 93009

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report, "Ventura County Employee Recruitment and Promotion"

Dear Mr. Cody,

The Grand Jury report 2006-2007, *Ventura County Employee Recruitment and Promotion*, identified as part of recommendation R-06 the suggested need to review the County's practices regarding "exit interviews". We have concluded our review and have developed the attached policy for implementation.

If you have any questions regarding this policy please feel free to contact me at 654-2561.

Sincerely,



Barry L. Zimmerman
Director, Human Resources

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DEC 21 2007
VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Attachment

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County of Ventura Human Resources Division

Personnel Policy

SUBJECT: Separation Questionnaire (Exit Survey)	REFERENCE NUMBER: 2007-008
DATE ISSUED: December 21, 2007	SUPERCEDES:

DISTRIBUTION: Agency/Department Heads
Agency/Department Personnel Officers/Representatives
County Executive Office Budget Analysts
Human Resources Division Personnel Analysts

The following will govern the process for conducting exit surveys for those employees who voluntarily leave County employment.

Background:

Separation Questionnaires or exit surveys are an integral part of assessing employee satisfaction and work climate. Exit surveys should be performed for all voluntary separations from employment to provide the most complete understanding of turnover. The surveys should be conducted using a standard format that can be used to develop comprehensive feedback on the work environment as well as reasons for leaving. In addition, surveys should be performed externally to minimize discomfort in revealing the true reasons for leaving, which improves the reliability of the results. Centralizing the feedback of data will permit improved monitoring and allow actions to be taken to improve the working environment countywide.

Procedure:

1. All employees who voluntarily separate from employment must be provided with a Separation Questionnaire
2. The Separation Questionnaire must include a confidential envelope addressed to: County Human Resources, Separation Questionnaire, #1970
3. The employee may provide a copy of their completed Separation Questionnaire to their department representative if they wish to do so.
4. The attached Separation Questionnaire is the standard format that should be used, no other questionnaires or surveys are allowed unless specifically authorized by County Human Resources.



VENTURA COUNTY SEPARATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Agency/Department: _____

Job Code: _____ Job Title: _____

I, _____, resign my job for the following reason(s) (may indicate more than one):
Print Name

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compensation | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient training | <input type="checkbox"/> No recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career change | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem w/coworker(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> No advancement | <input type="checkbox"/> Relocating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work schedule/conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem w/supervisor | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits | <input type="checkbox"/> Family obligations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long commute | <input type="checkbox"/> Health issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Please provide details: _____

My last day at work will be: _____

1. How much notice did you give, and to whom did you give it? _____

2. Please check the box that indicates your gender. Male Female

3. Please check the box that indicates your age.
 Under 25 25-32 33-40 41-50 Over 50

4. How long have you been continuously employed with the County?
 Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years More than 10 years

5. Have you accepted another job? Yes No

If yes, please answer 5.a. through 5.e.

a. Is it in the same career field? Yes No

b. When do you start? _____

c. What is your starting salary? (optional) _____

d. Please check the box that indicates how the starting salary of that job compares with your salary here. Higher Approximately Equal Lower

e. What is the name and address of the employer? _____

6. Please check the boxes below to indicate whether or not you were satisfied with the following:

a. On-the-job training Yes No

b. Opportunities for advancement Yes No

c. Work schedule Yes No

d. Compensation Yes No

e. Benefits Yes No

f. Supervision Yes No



VENTURA COUNTY
SEPARATION QUESTIONNAIRE

7. Is there any problem that you know about or have heard about concerning the agency or department?
Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

8. Was there an event or events that occurred to cause you decide to resign? Yes No
If yes, what? _____

9. Did you have any work-related problems with your supervisor? Yes No
• If so, did you discuss it with your supervisor or department head? Yes No
• Were you informed about the Employee Assistance Program to help resolve your issues? Yes No
• If so, did you use the resources of EAP? Yes No

10. Before making your decision to leave, did you investigate other options that would enable you to stay, such as a transfer? Yes No If yes, please explain: _____

11. Were you adequately informed about County policies and procedures, and were you provided copies or access to them? Yes No

12. Were you offered or made aware of training opportunities to help you become successful in your job? Yes No

13. What suggestions do you have for improving County procedures or working conditions? _____

14. Additional comments: _____

Employee Signature

Employee ID

Date

county of ventura

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION
BARRY L. ZIMMERMAN
Director

August 7, 2007

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Honorable Colleen Toy White, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
Hall of Justice, #2120
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Judge White:

Attached is my response to the Ventura County 2006-2007 Grand Jury report regarding Employee Recruitment and Promotion. Should you have any further questions, you can reach me at 654-2561.

Sincerely,



Barry L. Zimmerman
Director - Human Resources

Attachment

C: Alyce O. Klussman, Foreman
Ventura County 2006-2007 Grand Jury

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county of ventura

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION
BARRY L. ZIMMERMAN
Director

August 7, 2007

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2006-2007 GRAND JURY REPORT ENTITLED
"VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION"

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That your Board approve the attached response to the Grand Jury report that will be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with State statute.

DISCUSSION:

Penal Code §933.05 requires that a response to the Grand Jury's report findings and recommendations be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. The Grand Jury's report was issued as an interim report prior to the publication of the final 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report. Therefore, in accordance with the requested timetables, the attached response is being submitted.

Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding this item, please contact me at 654-2561.



BARRY ZIMMERMAN
Director-Human Resources

Attachment

c: John F. Johnston, County Executive Officer
Noel Klebaum, County Counsel

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**Response to Ventura County 2006-2007 Grand Jury report on
VENTURA COUNTY EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION**

Report Findings:

F-01 Ventura County uses three methods of employee recruitment:

- Open Recruitment – open to any applicant
- Countywide Recruitment – open to any applicant already employed by Ventura County
- Agency/Departmental Recruitment – open only to those who are employed in the applicable agency/department.
(Personnel Rules Article 3, § 306)

Response: Concur

F-02 In response to complaints that HR was not sufficiently responsive to countywide recruitment and hiring needs, HR has granted decentralized recruitment and hiring authority to certain county agencies and departments.

Response: Partially Concur

Due to staff and resource shortages, HR was unable to satisfactorily meet the demands for recruiting and hiring. As a result, some of the larger departments were granted the authority to initiate and perform much of the recruiting and application screening process. However, approval of the recruitment plan and examination process remains with HR.

F-03 Personnel Rules §304 states, "Each county agency/department and each major division thereof, as well as each recognized employee organization, shall receive a minimum of one (1) copy of each announcement for distribution and posting."

Response: Concur

All job announcements are posted on the County website and accessible to both public and county employees. Printed "hard copies" are posted at the Human Resources public counter at the Hall of Administration. Postings are made available at the County's Job and Career Centers as well as within each department by their respective Human Resources representatives.

F-04 It was alleged by the complainant that thorough distribution and posting of announcements in accordance with §304 requirements do not occur consistently in decentralized agency/department recruitments.

Response: Do not concur

The details of the alleged complainant was not filed or shared with the Human Resources department. Therefore, the nature of the complaint is unknown. However, posting and distribution of job announcements are performed in accordance with § 304 of the Personnel Rules and Regulations.

F0-5 There is no written guideline "...to insure that a sufficient number of qualified persons apply to meet the employment needs of the County" as specified in §304 of the Personnel Rules.

Response: Concur

The Personnel Rules and Regulations are sufficient in identifying the approved practices and procedures for posting and recruiting efforts. No further written guidelines are necessary.

F-06 Personnel Rules §307 states, "...the Director - Human Resources shall determine whether an agency/department promotional, countywide promotional or open recruitment shall be conducted." Instead, this determination has been delegated to staff Personnel Analysts within HR and also to those in the hiring agencies/departments.

Response: Do not concur

The Personnel Rules §307 does authorize the Director – Human Resources to determine the type of recruitment to be used. However, as a practical matter, the Director-Human Resources delegates this authority to staff to perform these functions. The authority for the Director – Human Resources to delegate specific authority is found in the Personnel Rules, Article 2 Definitions, Section 242, Director-Human Resources which states:

"Director-Human Resources: The title of the Director-Human Resources refers to the person occupying that classification or his designee."
{emphasis added}

F-07 Personnel Rules §307 further states, "Where a sufficient number of employees holding status in lower positions have the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities for the vacancies, a strong consideration shall be given to conducting a

Countywide promotional or agency/departmental promotional recruitment.”
Personnel Analysts have been determining the type of recruitment to be used.

Response: Concur with explanation.

The Personnel Analysts appropriately determine the type and scope of any recruitment as delegated by the Director – Human Resources. Please refer to the response for F-06.

F-08 In County-only or department-only recruitments, the hiring entity established the number of applicants from which a candidate may be selected. HR prefers at least five candidates. However, no minimum number is required and it could be as few as one.

Response: Do not concur

All promotional recruitments are to be open for a minimum of ten (10) days, and all eligible applicants who meet the specific job and recruitment criteria will be evaluated and ranked appropriately.

The “hiring” entity does not directly set the number of applicants to be solicited, the overall applicant pool is directly related to the number of application submitted. As a result of the posting policies, every potential candidate has an equal opportunity to apply for the opening.

It is correct, there is no minimum number of applicants required for internal promotions in order to be a valid promotional opportunity. Each promotional opportunity is unique and has to be individually evaluated as to the appropriateness of the recruitment. Approval to open and proceed with a promotional recruitment has been delegated to the HR Personnel Analyst.

F-09 HR recognized there may be a problem in an open recruitment if there is only one applicant and it has been determined that there are multiple qualified and capable employees. The concern is that an adequate number of people did not have the opportunity to apply. However, HR has not acted on such concerns.

Response: Do not concur

All recruitments are posted and opened in accordance with the Personnel Rules and Regulations that provide for equal access to all potential applicants, see response to F-03.

The goal of HR is to reach the most qualified applicants to secure the best candidate for employment. If a recruitment yields a small number of

applicants (e.g., one applicant), it would be prudent to assess the recruiting methods, the advertising approach, the job screening questions, etc. to determine if the best effort was made given the final outcome. However, the mere fact that only one applicant applied does not by itself invalidate the recruitment. There are many reasons why qualified applicants may not apply, such as compensation, work location, work environment, hours to be worked, assignments and duties, etc...

Therefore, it is at the discretion of the HR Personnel Analyst, or by request of the hiring department to extend a recruitment if it is perceived that a greater number of applicants would be generated.

F-10 HR does not consider it to be a problem if the recruitment is department-only and for a special period, and only one or two candidates apply.

Response: Do not concur

Department-only promotions may only have one or two eligible candidates and considered an appropriate recruitment. However, it is unclear the reference to a "special period". All County and departmental promotional recruitments are opened for a ten (10) workday in accordance with §304 of the Personnel Rules.

F-11 The complainant testified that a new position was created and an individual was pre-selected prior to any official posting of the opening. HR agrees that there have been allegations of "wired" (pre-determined) appointments but states that they have never been proven.

Response: Do not concur

HR was not involved in reviewing the allegations made by the complainant and cannot fully respond to the issues being identified by the Grand Jury report. However, from time to time we do receive various types of complaints and/or grievances regarding a recruitment and promotional opportunity. As a matter of practice, we review any complaint or filed grievance, and depending on the nature of the protest there may be subsequent steps or processes required as outlined in the Personnel Rules.

However, HR does not support or condone any practice of recruiting, promoting or hiring of employees that is contrary to the established Personnel Rules and Regulations.

F-12 The hiring entity and the assigned Personnel Analyst determined the appropriate amount of work experience or education required for a position; however, the Personnel Analyst is responsible for developing minimum qualifications. Normally one year of experience equals one year of education.

Response: Do not concur

All job positions must be approved and authorized by the Board of Supervisors before they can be used for employment opportunities. Job specifications are developed by the HR Personnel Analyst with departmental input. The job specifications detail the job description, the job duties, the overall responsibilities, and the minimum qualifications for that job title.

Each job announcement will list the minimum qualifications required to be considered eligible for that position as provided on the approved Job Specification. However, on occasion, the hiring entity may require more stringent qualifying standards than those listed in as the minimum qualifications. Nevertheless, in no case should the qualifying standards be less than the minimum qualifications listed on the job specification. Any change to the minimum qualifications requires approval from Human Resources. In general, one year of experience equates to one year of education.

F-13 The Personnel Analyst screens applications to determine which applicants meet minimum position requirements.

Response: Partially concur

The Personnel Analysts are responsible for those departments where the authority to perform recruitment activities have not been delegated or decentralized. Decentralized departments have their own staff performing the minimum qualification screening of applicants.

F-14 The typical recruitment is open for a minimum ten-day period. Some particularly difficult recruitments (i.e., law enforcement officers, nurses, or those positions with high turnover, such as entry-level clerical staff) are open for continuous recruitment in order to establish lists of prospective candidates.

Response: Concur

F-15 Personnel Rules §510 states, "Whenever an employee is filling a position in a classification lower than that of the authorized allocation, an underfill situation

exists.” To be eligible for promotion to a higher classification a candidate must participate in a formal recruitment.

Response: Do not concur

Personnel Rule §510 states in its entirety:

“Promotion in an Underfill Situation: Whenever an employee is filling a position in a classification lower than that of the authorized allocation, an underfill situation exists. To be eligible for promotion to a higher allocation level, the employee must have either originally competed for appointment to the underfill position or must successfully compete with other candidates for the promotion to the higher allocation classification. In no case shall an employee in an underfill situation be promoted without a competition as described above. If a position which is being underfilled is allocated at a higher level and if the employee in the underfill situation is satisfactorily and substantially performing the duties of the higher classification, and if the employee in the underfill situation meets the established minimum employment standards for the higher classification, then such employee shall be promoted, provided that the other provisions of this section are met”

Consistent with section §510, there are two ways an employee can promote from an underfill position. First, if the employee already competed for the position (as an underfill) and is performing and meets the requirements of the higher position, then they may be promoted without a “formal” recruitment process. Secondly, the underfill promotion may be filled through a regular examination process.

The later methodology is most commonly followed within the County. The determination and appropriateness to allow for an underfill to occur resides with the HR Personnel Analyst.

F-16 Personnel Rules §511 provides for a selection interview rather than the normal examination process when, upon written justification by the hiring agency/department and approval by the Director - Human Resources, there are three or fewer applicants for a position.

Response: Concur

F-17 It is an unwritten County policy to promote from within and then conduct an open recruitment if the internal recruitment is unsuccessful.

Response: Partially concur

It is a common practice, but not necessarily an “unwritten” policy to promote from within before seeking an open recruitment. The Personnel Rules and Regulations support the concept of promoting from “within” before opening up the recruitments to outside candidates. Personnel Rule §307 states in part:

“...the Director-Human Resources shall determine whether an agency/department promotional, Countywide promotional or open recruitment shall be conducted. Such determination shall be in accord with the best interests of the County. Where a sufficient number of employees hold status in lower positions have the requisite skills, knowledge and abilities for the vacancies, a strong consideration shall be given to conducting a Countywide promotional or agency/departmental promotional recruitment.” {emphasis added}

- F-18 An employee who perceives that there has been an unfair recruitment may file a complaint either with his or her supervisor, HR, the Civil Service Commission, his or her union representative, or with the Auditor-Controller’s Waste and Abuse Hotline.

Response: Partially concur

There is nothing to prevent someone who feels there has been unfair recruitment from complaining to the persons indicated in F-18, however, the appeal process and authority for remedy resides with the Human Resources Department. In some circumstances as outlined in the Personnel Rules and Regulations, the appeal will involve the Civil Service Commission.

- F-19 Exit interviews, held upon the separation of an employee regarding their reason for leaving, have not been consistently conducted.

Response: Concur

The development of a new policy and procedure is being reviewed.

- F-20 To ensure countywide consistency and uniformity, new policy is being developed by HR for decentralized departments to outline completely their written recruitment process and obtain HR’s approval in advance before opening the recruitment.

Response: Concur

On February 22, 2007 a policy regarding documentation and approval process for recruitments was developed and subsequently introduced to all the decentralized departments.

The recruitment policy provides the decentralized departments with a written format to complete a recruitment plan that is fully compliant with County policy and the Personnel Rules and Regulations. The recruitment plan as outlined in the policy provide the HR Personnel Analyst with all the necessary documentation to adequately review and approve the opening of the recruitment.

The recruitment plan includes documentation regarding, the job announcements, screening and selection criteria, types of recruitment, etc. All requisitions to open a recruitment are to be submitted to HR with a completed "recruitment plan" in accordance with the policy and must be approved by the HR Personnel Analyst prior to the opening of the recruitment. This policy applies to all departments/agencies conducting recruitments. With the advent of this recruitment policy, all recruitment efforts should be consistently developed, reviewed and performed.

Report Conclusions

- C-01 Adherence to the Personnel Rules has become inconsistent and inequitable as a consequence of decentralizing HR functions (F-02, F-04 through F-07)
- C-02 As an additional result of decentralization, HR's control and oversight have been compromised. (F-04 through F-07)
- C-03 Recruitment announcements are not always posted in accordance with Personnel Rules, which has resulted in allegations that not all potential applicants are aware of recruitments. (F-03, F-04, F-09, F-11)
- C-04 Delegation of authority by the HR Director to Personnel Analyst for determining which type of recruitment is appropriate (open, county, or agency/departmental) appears to be contrary to §306 of the Personnel Rules. (F-06, F-07)
- C-05 In Countywide or agency/departmental recruitments where there is only one applicant, there is a perception of favoritism. (F-04, F-05, F-09, F-11)

- C-06 Policies regarding internal promotion and recruitment should be made part of the written Personnel Rules in order to prevent misinterpretation or misuse. (F-17)
- C-07 Using the ambiguous term "sufficient" instead of a specific number in §304 of the Personnel Rules creates the opportunity for "pre-selected" appointments. (F-05, F-07)
- c-08 Under §511 of the Personnel Rules (Promotion by Nomination), it is possible for the appointing authority to interview only one applicant. (F-16)
- C-09 Occasionally there are fewer than three internal applicants for a promotion when more qualified personnel might exist. This may indicate that qualified personnel were not encouraged to apply, that the recruitment targeted too few potential applicants, or that the recruitment was "wired" for a pre determined candidate. (F-05, F-08, F-11)
- C-10 Exit interviews are beneficial in that they provide an opportunity for department employees to relate their experiences regarding improper or biased recruitment practices without fear of retaliation. Exit interviews can also provide the opportunity for valuable feedback on other issues that may warrant further review. (F-19)

Report Recommendations

- R-01 The Ventura County Human Resources Department (HR) should take appropriate action to reestablish oversight and control of the County's HR function. (C-01 through C-04)

Response:

A policy has been developed and implemented to provide oversight, approval and control for all recruitment activities. See response to F-20 for details.

- R-02 HR should consider revising the County of Ventura Personnel Rules and Regulations (Personnel Rules) to eliminate inconsistencies and ambiguities and to formalize practices based on unwritten policies. (C-01 though C-07, C-09)

Response:

We will continue to review the applicability and the need to modify the Personnel Rules and Regulations and policies of the County. We do recognize that the County's HR system and recruitment process is complex and requires adjustments and needed improvements from time to time. However, it is our overall opinion that the current recruitment practices do adhere to and are compliant with the Personnel Rules and Regulations and meet the intent of the Civil Service system.

R-03 The Director of HR must either stop delegating authority where the Personnel Rules do not provide for delegation or revise the Personnel Rules to authorize the delegation of authority. Revised Personnel Rules need to specify limits on any delegated authority. (C-04)

Response:

We do take exception to this recommendation and to the conclusion derived in the report (C-04). The Director of HR has appropriately delegated his authority in accordance with the Personnel Rules and Regulations as explained in the response to F-06. Therefore, there is no need to revise the Personnel Rules.

R-04 HR should reestablish and maintain control of recruitments and promotions to ensure that decentralized hiring authorities are following Personnel Rules. (C-01 through C-07, C-09)

Response:

A policy has been established and implemented to improve the overall control and oversight of the recruitment process for decentralized departments. See responses to R-01 and F-20.

R-05 Personnel Rules §511 should be revised to require final approval by the Director - Human Resources of a promotion by nomination. The Director must not delegate the authority to approve such promotions. (C-08, C-09)

Response:

The Grand Jury's recommendation to revise §511 is somewhat unclear and vague. The findings and conclusions contained in the report do not address any deficiency or incident of non-compliance with the provisions of rule §511 or inappropriate exercise of authority by the HR Personnel Analyst. Therefore, it remains unclear to the motive and reasoning behind this recommendation.

Nevertheless, the Personnel Rules clearly allows the Director-Human Resources to delegate his authority to his "designated representatives". The need and ability to delegate approval authority to HR Personnel staff is vital in order to manage the volume and pace of activity that is required for an organization of this size.

R-06 Exit interviews should be consistently conducted for all terminating employees. The interview should be conducted by a supervisor or manager from a department or agency other than where the terminating employee worked. The results of these interviews should be forwarded to the exiting employee's department and the HR for analysis in order to improve personnel practices countywide. (C-10).

Response:

We will take this recommendation under advisement.

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