

# **Ventura County Grand Jury 2014 - 2015**



## **Final Report**

### **Ventura County Hiring Processes**

**June 12, 2015**

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## **Ventura County Hiring Processes**

**Note:** See “**Glossary**” for definitions.

### **Summary**

The County of Ventura (County) is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the State of California (State), with 850,000 residents. The County government is the second-largest local employer, with more than 8,000 people working in numerous Countywide locations.

The 2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) received a public complaint about the County’s recruiting/hiring/promoting processes and initiated an investigation. Of particular interest were applicant screening, testing, and interviewing procedures.

The Grand Jury methodology consisted of gathering information from the County’s personnel rules and regulations, interviewing County personnel, studying County webpages, performing general Internet research, and reading news articles.

The Grand Jury learned the following key facts:

- The County’s 28 organizational entities have highly specialized personnel needs, from firefighters to forensic lab assistants, as well as more general needs, for example, administrative assistants.
- Employees of the Human Resources Division (HRD) are located in a “central” Human Resources (HR) unit and in nine “satellite” HR units. Those in central HR handle full-spectrum personnel functions for 19 of the County’s agencies/departments. Those in the satellite units handle the personnel functions for the agency/department in which they are located. Central HR analysts play a key role on behalf of all agencies /departments.
- Recruitment, hiring, and promotion involve at least 15 highly regulated steps.
- Nationwide, the number Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) filings alleging employment discrimination averages about 90,000 yearly and is trending upward.
- The County has a regularly updated Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan that includes activities to recruit applicants from diverse cultural groups.
- The HRD works to enhance its operations through setting goals, identifying tactics, using Lean Six Sigma methodology (see Glossary), and sharing best practices.

The Grand Jury found that:

- The HRD is well organized to carry out its complex and demanding recruiting/hiring functions.
- The County’s tightly structured recruiting/hiring process is intended to avoid the fact and appearance of bias and preclude legal actions based on charges of discrimination. The process sometimes results in bypassing well-qualified candidates.
- The HRD has applied continuous process-improvement methods to some steps of recruiting and hiring with impressive success.
- Limited public knowledge of available student-worker positions gives a possible advantage to those who manage to become aware of them. Over time student workers can acquire on-the-job training, agency contacts, and knowledge of the hiring process that can benefit them when applying for future posted positions.

The Grand Jury’s final report makes two main recommendations that could lead to improving the HRD’s recruiting/hiring/promoting processes:

- The Board of Supervisors (BOS) direct the HRD to review current restrictive recruitment/hiring procedures with the aim of discovering other fair and legally tenable applicant-filtering techniques.
- The Board of Supervisors direct the HRD to expand its use of Lean Six Sigma methodology to analyze parts of the recruiting/hiring/promoting process.

## **Background**

In response to a public complaint, the Grand Jury initiated an investigation into the processes involved in being hired and promoted by the County of Ventura.

The Grand Jury wanted to review the steps of the County’s hiring process in general. In particular the Grand Jury wished to determine whether, for any reason, qualified applicants are being kept out of the candidates’ pool, are being unfairly ranked within the pool, or are not being fairly promoted.

The Grand Jury was especially interested to learn whether “subject matter experts” (SMEs)—people who are experts in a position’s responsibilities—are sufficiently involved in the early stages of the applicant review and selection process.

The Grand Jury also wanted to investigate whether certain types of candidates receive preferential treatment, for example, female or male, of a particular cultural/ethnic background, a County employee, or a relative of a County employee.

## **Methodology**

The Grand Jury performed the following actions as part of this investigation:

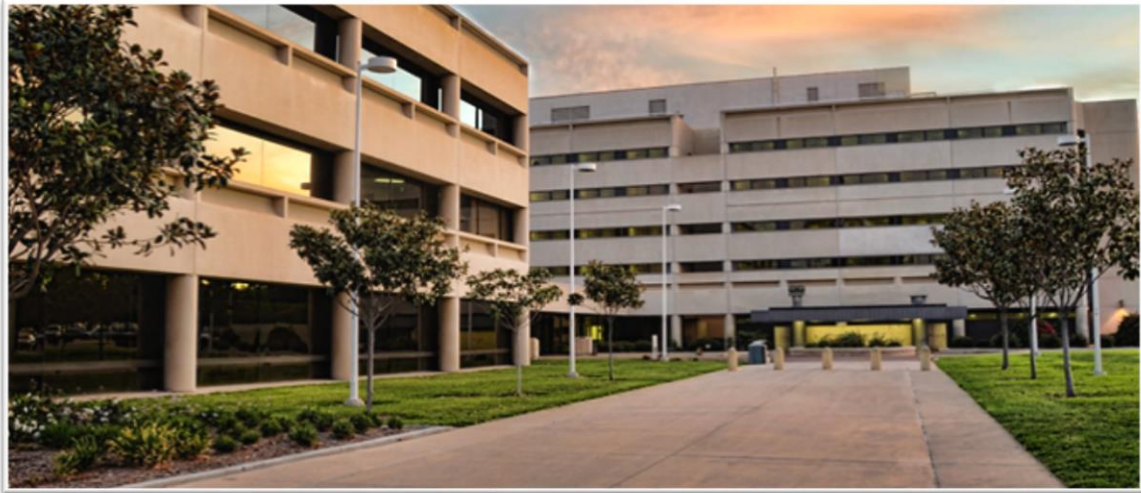
- Researched State and federal labor law hiring policies

- Inquired into the organizational structure of the County’s Human Resources Division
- Examined the County’s current HR administrative policies that cover how employees are recruited, hired, and promoted
- Interviewed County personnel
- Studied the County’s online information related to HR
- Reviewed online articles and resources provided by professional HR associations
- Looked at online websites for suppliers of competency, skills, and personality tests for HR professionals
- Read media pieces on hiring and promotion issues
- Read the 1997-1998 Ventura County Grand Jury’s report, *Department of Human Resources Hiring Practices Inquiry*

To manage the project’s scope, the investigation focused on the County’s regular full-time employees. It excluded “at-will” employees—those who can be dismissed at any time for any reason—since they are a very small minority: 1.2% of total employees. At-will hiring may or may not include open recruitment and/or other steps of the regular recruitment/hiring process, though at-will applicants currently do undergo the examination process. Also excluded were special categories of employees: elected, extra-help, per-diem, intermittent, and optimum-census.

**Facts**

- FA-01.** The County complies with State labor laws, which include antidiscrimination regulations. The State conducts independent compliance audits of County HR processes every three to four years. [Ref-01, Ref-02]
- FA-02.** The County is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the State, with 850,000 residents living in 10 incorporated cities and large unincorporated areas. The County has a strong economy built on industries such as agriculture, military testing and development, biotechnology, oil production, and tourism. [Ref-03]
- FA-03.** County government is the second-largest local employer. As of March 27, 2015, the County employed a total of 8,848 employees in seven categories: regular (7,912), extra-help (456), intermittent (279), at-will (102), per-diem (80), elected (11), and optimum-census (8). They work in 28 agencies and departments countywide. [Ref-03, Ref-04]
- FA-04.** The United States military—including two naval bases and the Air National Guard base—is the County’s largest employer, with personnel of more than 16,000. [Ref-03]



*Two buildings in the County’s Government Center on Victoria Avenue, Ventura, where Human Resources and most other departments have their headquarters  
(County photo used by permission)*

- FA-05.** The County’s general recruiting/hiring policies are briefly outlined in its *Administrative Policy Manual*. [Ref-05]
- FA-06.** Standard operating procedures for recruiting, hiring, and promoting employees are detailed in the HRD’s *Personnel Rules and Regulations for Employees of the County of Ventura*, in the *Management, Confidential Clerical and Other Unrepresented Employees Resolution*, and in memorandums of agreement (MOAs) with unions. [Ref-06, Ref-07]
- FA-07.** The County’s 28 organizational entities are extremely diverse and have highly specialized personnel needs (e.g., anesthesiologist, fire captain), as well as needs for personnel with more general skills (e.g., administrative assistant). [Ref-03, Ref-04]
- FA-08.** The County Executive Office (CEO) has authority over the Human Resources Division, which employs more than 125 people Countywide. [Ref-08]
- FA-09.** The HRD employs a centralized group of 58 people. This group handles a full spectrum of HR responsibilities for 19 County agencies/departments. Among them is the Ventura County Health Care Agency (VCHCA), with 17 HR personnel on site at the agency. (After 10 years of decentralized HR functions, central HR resumed responsibilities for the VCHCA in January 2015.) [Ref-09, Ref-10]
- FA-10.** Nine County agencies/departments contain decentralized (satellite) HR departments with at least one full-time, dedicated HR employee:
  - Department of Child Support Services
  - District Attorney

- Fire Protection District
- General Services Agency
- Human Services Agency
- Information Technology Services
- Public Defender
- Resource Management Agency
- Sheriff's Department

**FA-11.** A central HR analyst, assigned to each County entity, assists with its HR activities, whether the entity has a full satellite HR department or a single individual—such as an administrative assistant—whose responsibilities may include handling some HR-related tasks.

Central HR analysts perform many functions for their designated agencies/departments. In addition to recruitment or recruitment oversight, they also determine job classifications (e.g., Engineering Manager I–III, Legal Management Assistant I–IV) and compensation ranges; screen applications for completeness and minimum qualifications; and advise hiring authorities on compliance with Civil Service rules and MOAs with unions. They collaborate on questions to be included in competitive exams and interviews. They give final approval of the competitive test(s) selected. They arrange for basic background checks, although certain agencies (e.g., Fire Department, Sheriff's Office) do additional checks on their own.

Central HR analysts are usually assigned to assist a number of agencies/departments at a time; assignments are periodically rotated as a way to spread experience.

In addition to recruiting/hiring functions, HR analysts provide personnel training and benefits services, oversee the Employee Assistance Program, and carry out special projects, with some tasks in the areas of labor relations and discipline.

**FA-12.** A total of 44 employees work in the nine decentralized HR departments. Central HR analysts play a significant role in the personnel functions of all County agencies/departments; however, the nine decentralized HR departments have a good deal of independent authority. For example, they may choose to personally review applications or automate the review—a decision that frequently depends on the number of applications. They consult with the hiring authority on what kinds of tests to administer (e.g., oral, written, skills) and may choose to develop their own questions working with SMEs, use a test from the HR test bank, or rent a test from an outside vendor—although their central analyst gives final approval of the test(s) selected.

**FA-13.** A source from outside central HR said, in effect, that the recruiting and hiring process is designed to be structured and consistent and has so many reviews, the public can trust the process.

**FA-14.** Major steps in the County’s **open recruiting and hiring process** are given below. (They are not always performed in this order.)

- The hiring authority and hiring supervisor (if different) review and/or write a **job description**. They confer with their assigned central HR analyst to do a **job-specific analysis** and establish **minimum qualifications** (also called “employment standards”). SMEs from the hiring department and elsewhere often help with these initial steps, especially if the position to be filled is a technical one. This procedure is usually done each time a position becomes vacant, unless there have been no significant changes.

Some minimum qualifications may be set by outside agencies, e.g., the DNA Advisory Board sets standards for laboratory technical leaders.

- The hiring agency/department submits a **position requisition** to central HR.
- The **position posting** is entered on the County’s “Employment Opportunities” webpage, which uses NeoGov personnel software to allow hiring authorities and applicants to track the steps of the process. Hard-copy lists of job opportunities are available at the HRD lobby desk in the County Hall of Administration and at other agencies Countywide. Open recruitments may be advertised in newspapers and/or professional journals as well.
- The **length of time** applications are accepted varies. Some recruitments may be open for only one or two days due to a consistently high volume of applications; in that case, deadlines are posted with job descriptions and application instructions. Some recruitments are “continuous,” meaning they may close at any time the number of applicants is deemed sufficient. Specialized satellite recruitments—for example, for a clinical lab analyst—can go on for a year or more. An average recruitment is about two weeks.
- The hiring unit’s central HR analyst or its own satellite HR department conducts a thorough **application screening**, checking for completeness and a match with the approved minimum qualifications. The screening includes a review of requested evidence such as a diploma, license, or typing certificate.
- Hiring authorities working with HR analysts decide on a **competitive examination or examinations**, which may be oral, written, physical, and/or skills based/practical. These exams may be produced in house with input from SMEs or acquired by renting or purchasing them from companies recognized as SMEs. They are generic, knowledge-based exams administered by central or



satellite HR to applicants who successfully complete application screening. To pass the exam(s), a score of 70% or higher is required on each part. [Ref-06]

- For an oral examination, HR designates a **rating panel**. Panel members must be in the same or higher earning classification as the position being filled. An SME for the panel may be drawn from the department's own members (with approval of the hiring authority). SMEs may also be drawn from a County agency in a related field, former managers/directors of the hiring department/agency, or other resources.
- The panel conducts the **oral examination** using prepared questions approved by the designated central HR analyst. Candidates receive ratings based on a detailed standard grid.
- Central HR generates an "**eligible list**" of those who pass the screening and competitive exam(s). Candidates' placement, or "ranking," on the list is based on their final examination score(s). Permanent regular County employees get five points added to their final score; military veterans get similar preference points. No more than five preference points are given to any one person.
- HR provides the hiring authority with the **names of all applicants** (minimum of three) in the highest ranking. If the hiring authority rejects these candidates, with suitable justification, she or he is offered the names of those who are in the next-highest ranking, and so on.
- A second panel—the hiring (or selection) panel, which includes nondepartmental members—holds a **hiring interview** for the finalists. This interview is more open ended and conversational than the oral exam.
- The hiring agency/department is responsible for checking the candidates' **professional references**.
- The hiring panel makes the **final decision** on whom to hire and informs HR in writing of the reasons for selecting that candidate and not others who were interviewed.
- After a candidate is selected, the unit's HR analyst arranges for a routine **background check**.
- New hires enter a **probationary period** with a performance review scheduled after six months or a year.
- Candidates not selected remain on an **eligible list**, usually for six months to one year.

[Ref-05, Ref-06, Ref-09, Ref-11] (Att-01)

**FA-15.** Central HR maintains ongoing eligible lists for different types of applicants who have already been "certified"—gone through

application screening and competitive testing. These eligible lists are made available to the hiring agency/department as another source of candidates. [Ref-05, Ref-06] (Att-01)

- FA-16.** Since the County favors internal recruiting, HR seeks interested people in other County agencies/departments who have “equivalent” (transferable) skills and abilities. Even with strong internal candidates, however, central HR or a satellite HR department might elect to do an open recruitment to expand the candidate pool. [Ref-06]
- FA-17.** Standardized positions, e.g., administrative assistants, automatically go through internal Countywide recruitment, which includes being certified. [Ref-06] (Att-01)
- FA-18.** Promotional recruitments for positions that require specialized skills only useful to certain agencies/departments are selected by agency/department recruitment and/or Countywide recruitment. Applicants for these positions generally go through all the steps listed in FA-14. [Ref-06] (Att-01)
- FA-19.** A position may also be filled by transfer (or “lateral transfer”). The *Personnel Rules and Regulations* adopted by County supervisors define “transfer” as “a change from one public agency to another or from one department to another in the same or similar classifications. It is also a change from one class to a similar class within a department or agency.” [Ref-06] (Att-01)
- FA-20.** For lateral transfers and promotional recruitments, a candidate’s past job performance may be considered, along with documented job-related life experience and continuing education. Applicants may be asked to bring their last three performance reviews, though not all positions or departments require this. [Ref-06]
- FA-21.** The hiring authority typically serves as the “point person” for the recruiting/hiring process: writing or cowriting the job description, specifying minimum qualifications, suggesting raters for the first interview, reviewing applications of certified candidates, taking part in the final hiring interview, and jointly making the final selection.
- FA-22.** The County’s HR website includes full instructions, test-taking advice for new applicants, an HR number to call for application materials or answers to recruitment questions, and a toll-free applicant support phoneline for problems that may arise while filling out an online application. Applicants may review the status of their submitted application(s) at any time by visiting the GovernmentJobs.com website. [Ref-09, Ref-11]
- FA-23.** The HRD, following policies in the *Personnel Rules and Regulations*, places great emphasis on avoiding conflict of interest and keeping the recruiting/hiring/promoting process as fair and unbiased as possible. Examples:

- The articles of the *Personnel Rules and Regulations* covering recruitment, application, and testing all contain sections on nondiscrimination. [Ref-06]
- Central HR analysts coach interview-panel members on “the 10 no-no’s” of questions—no asking about age, sexual preference, ancestry, or anything else not related to the ability to perform a specific job function.
- No one who assists in preparing examination questions may also serve as a scorer/rater for that examination. This is intended to ensure that test preparers do not write questions that will be beneficial or detrimental to any particular candidate. [Ref-06]
- All oral examinations use the same preapproved questions and the same rating grid. Panel members are instructed not to answer questions from candidates nor to ask additional questions, since this could give one candidate a chance to excel or fall short that other candidates would not have.
- No more than one employee from the hiring agency/department may participate as a rater in an oral examination. This is intended to guard against bias that might stem from a shared work culture. [Ref-06]
- The same person (e.g., the hiring authority or an SME) cannot serve on both the oral exam and the hiring interview panels. This gives candidates a greater chance of different perspectives and less chance of having one person’s opinion dominate the selection process. [Ref-06]
- No interview panel member can be a relative of the person being interviewed. Friends and close acquaintances are asked to recuse themselves.
- No appointing authority can hire or supervise (directly or indirectly) a member of her/his immediate family. [Ref-06]
- Applicants for entry-level positions in the Fire Department are so numerous (up to 3,000 in a recruitment for one academy class), a lottery system is used to ensure that opportunities are spread equally through the candidate pool—even though this inevitably bypasses some of those who might make equally good or better hires than those selected.
- Women and diverse cultural groups are not given additional points on eligible lists, which would be equivalent to Affirmative Action. (Affirmative Action was outlawed by the State in 1996.) Instead, the County prepares, approves, posts online, and implements an Equal Employment Opportunity Plan. The current plan covers 2014-2016. [Ref-12, Ref-13, Ref-14, Ref-15, Ref-16, Ref-17, Ref-18, Ref-19]



*Positions with the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) are so coveted that as many as 3,000 applicants may apply each time a recruitment is posted. (Photo courtesy of VCFD)*

- FA-24.** The County makes frequent outreach efforts to recruit women and cultural groups that reflect the makeup of the County’s residents. In the Employee Section of the County’s Strategic Plan, Objective 4 states: “Identify areas of underrepresentation of people of color and women and outline the action steps necessary to increase their representation in those areas where they are significantly under-represented.” Objective 5 reads: “Assess the County’s advertising strategy to ensure that all avenues for reaching diverse communities are utilized.” [Ref-06, Ref-12, Ref-13, Ref-14, Ref-15, Ref-16, Ref-18, Ref-19]
- FA-25.** Central HR analysts advise against nepotism, though no regulations prohibit County employees from hiring a relative of another County employee. All the investigation’s sources agreed that nepotism is not a significant factor in the County. [Ref-06, Ref-20, Ref-21]
- FA-26.** When a cultural group protested about County at-will applicants not being given examinations, the County began to test them, even though doing so is not required.
- FA-27.** Nationwide, the number of lawsuits based on alleged discrimination in employment, including recruiting and hiring, is escalating. “The

EEOC's statistics about employment discrimination continue to demonstrate a three year trend of increased charge filing and litigation. Driven by the dismal economy, a bigger EEOC enforcement budget, and employee-friendly revisions to EEO laws, the employment discrimination lawsuit trend is expected to continue... U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) statistics reveal that the highest number of employment discrimination charges in its 45 year history were filed in the fiscal year ending on September 30, 2010...[T]he average single claimant lawsuit results in defense costs of \$250,000 and a jury verdict of \$200,000. Other sources place the average verdict awards even higher, at nearly \$900,000 in 2007, with the average settlement nearly \$550,000...."

Though the total of charges filed has dipped since 2010's record, to 88,778 in 2014, the long-term trend is steadily upward. [Ref-18, Ref-19, Ref-20, Ref-21]

- FA-28.** One way for an entry-level job seeker to gain an edge on the competition is to be hired as a student worker. These positions are not posted nor advertised; students hear about them from a friend, relative, County employee, or college outreach programs conducted by individual agencies/departments.
- FA-29.** The County has a Civil Service Commission with an established mission: "To protect the rights of civil service employees and to maintain the integrity of the Civil Service System by serving as an independent and impartial ruling body charged with conducting disciplinary appeal hearings and ruling on matters relating to unfair labor practices, discrimination complaints, examination appeals, and employee representation issues." The Commission's website includes an established procedure for complaints about examinations (oral or written), favoritism, denials of promotions, and so on. Complaint procedures are also spelled out in the County's *Personnel Rules and Regulations*. [Ref-06, Ref-13]
- FA-30.** Goals for the HRD, like other major County agencies/departments, are included and measured as part of the *2011–2016 Ventura County Strategic Plan, 2014 Update*. Under the plan heading "County Workforce," three goals are listed:
- "Attract, hire, develop and retain an effective, diverse, professional, dedicated and responsive team of employees."
  - "Empower employees at every level to provide county services with maximum effectiveness and efficiency."
  - "Develop employees to become leaders who promote ethics, innovation, service, accountability and peak performance."

[Ref-14]



- FA-31.** The HRD regularly shares “best practices” with other Human Resources professionals by participating in a Statewide coalition of HR personnel from all 58 counties, a Southern California HR professional group, and the California Public Employers Labor Relations Association (CALPELRA).
- FA-32.** Lean Six Sigma methodology has been used intermittently on the County’s recruiting/hiring procedures. For example, a Kaizen event done for the requisition step in one County agency/department reduced process time from an average of 34 days down to 7 days.
- FA-33.** Central HR’s goal is to conduct 80% of recruitments in under 35 days (from opening the recruitment to generating the preference list). At the time of this investigation, that figure stood at 92%. Public-safety positions (e.g., police officers, firefighters) take longer because of additional background checks.



*On Tuesday, April 21, 2015, the Board of Supervisors recognized 16 employees who have at least 25 years of service with the County. 25 Years: Steven W. Buckley; Kathryn Connell; Rosemary Downs; Marisela Gonzalez; Estela Guillen; Corina Velasquez Lozano; Ana McCubbin; Hoang Meyer; Ellen Reed and Claudia Reyes. 30 Years: Phil Garcia; Francisca Ocampo and Leticia Robinson. 35 Years: Lydia A. Rillo Aguilar; Rosario Rodriguez and E. Christina Valenzuela.  
(County photo used by permission)*

## **Findings**

- FI-01.** The County’s 28 agencies and departments are so highly diverse that managing their multifaceted human resources responsibilities is extremely complicated and demanding. (FA-04, FA-06, FA-07, FA-09, FA-10, FA-11, FA-12, FA-14, FA-15, FA-16)
- FI-02.** The County’s HRD is well structured and organized to carry out its complex recruiting/hiring functions. (FA-06, FA-07, FA-08, FA-09, FA-10, FA-11, FA-12, FA-13, FA-14, FA-15, FA-16, FA-17, FA-18, FA-19, FA-20, FA-21)

- FI-03.** The County has sufficient and effective policies and procedures in place to prevent noticeable favoritism and nepotism in the recruiting and hiring of employees. Therefore, the County appears to be protected against such events as the nepotism-related exam cheating reported by the *Los Angeles Times* about the Los Angeles County Fire Department in fall 2014. (FA-13, FA-14, FA-23, FA-24, FA-25, FA-26, FA-28, FA-30)
- FI-04.** The County’s posted HR information is clear and complete, especially regarding the application and testing procedures, with helpful instructions and test-taking advice for new applicants. (FA-06, FA-22)
- FI-05.** The County’s structured and consistent hiring process is intended to avoid the fact and appearance of any bias, thereby tending to preclude legal actions based on alleged discrimination. Sometimes, however, such a tightly structured process results in bypassing well-qualified candidates. This clearly happens in Fire Department lotteries, and it can also occur if minimum qualifications are very narrowly worded (see FI-06). (FA-05, FA-06, FA-13, FA-14, FA-22, FA-23, FA-24, FA-25, FA-26, FA-27, FA-28)
- FI-06.** Establishing minimum qualifications is a critical step in the recruiting/hiring process, because an entity’s satellite HR staff or its central HR analyst will use these qualifications to cull ineligible candidates from all the applications received. Hiring authorities and other SMEs do not review applications until a candidate is a finalist.
- In preparing job descriptions, which include minimum qualifications, hiring authorities are often asked to list qualifications of the “ideal” candidate as opposed to the “acceptable” candidate. If these qualifications are not carefully worded, viable candidates may be excluded. Some potentially good hires do not get through the application-screening step because qualifications are too narrowly expressed. For example: “Must have Lean Six Sigma experience” could exclude applicants with similar “Quality Circles” experience; “Must have public-sector management experience” could eliminate excellent managers from the private sector. Such equivalent or supplemental experience is not considered if core qualifications are not met. (FA-14, FA-21)
- FI-07.** Other rules intended to prevent bias mandate that the same person cannot take part in more than one of three crucial steps: helping to prepare the oral exam, rating the oral exam, or serving on the hiring-interview panel. This can mean that the person who knows the job best—often the one who has been performing it—has very limited input. Especially for technical/specialized positions, such restricted participation by the key SME may constitute a major challenge to hiring the best candidate. (FA-05, FA-06, FA-14, FA-23)

- FI-08.** The HRD has committed to continuous process improvement and “Service Excellence.” The County’s Strategic Plan reflects this commitment. Some HR analysts and managers have taken Lean Six Sigma courses and applied the process to recruitment and hiring with impressive success. (FA-31, FA-32, FA-33, FA-34)
- FI-09.** Limited public knowledge of available student-worker positions gives a possible advantage to those who manage to become aware of them. Over time student workers can acquire on-the-job training, agency contacts who can be used as references, and knowledge of the hiring process. This can benefit them when applying for future posted positions. (FA-29)

**Recommendations**

- R-01.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the HRD to review current recruitment/hiring processes to include more applicants and to determine if the processes can be made less restrictive, especially in the early stages. The aim of such a review would be to discover other fair and legally tenable applicant-filtering techniques. (FI-01, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07)
- R-02.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the HRD to expand its use of Lean Six Sigma methodology to analyze parts of the recruiting/hiring process. Examples: (1) Agencies/departments could hold Kaizen events on what happens after they receive a list of screened candidates from HR. (2) HR could arrange for anonymous surveys of people who have recently been involved in the recruitment/hiring process: new employees, unsuccessful candidates, hiring authorities, SMEs, interview-panel members, and other stakeholders. (FI-07, FI-08)
- R-03.** The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors direct the HRD to broaden the recruitment of student workers by posting those positions online. (FI-09)

**Responses**

Responses required from:

Ventura County Board of Supervisors (FI-01, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07, FI-08, FI-09) (R-01, R-02, R-03)

Responses requested from:

County Executive Officer, County of Ventura (FI-01, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07, FI-08, FI-09) (R-01, R-02, R-03)

Human Resources Director, County of Ventura (FI-01, FI-05, FI-06, FI-07, FI-08, FI-09) (R-01, R-02, R-03)



## References

- Ref-01.** State of California, *Labor Law Code*, sections relating to hiring, i.e., sections 430-435; 970-977; 980;1024.5-1024.6; 4050-4056; homepage, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=lab&codebody=&hits=20> (accessed November 1, 2014).
- Ref-02.** State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, *Women's Rights Handbook*, "Chapter 1 – Employment," [https://oag.ca.gov/publications/womansrights/ch1#1\\_2](https://oag.ca.gov/publications/womansrights/ch1#1_2) (accessed May 14, 2015).
- Ref-03.** County of Ventura website, "About Us" page, <http://www.ventura.org/county-of-ventura/about-us> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-04.** County of Ventura website, "Departments/Agencies" page, <http://www.ventura.org/departments> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-05.** County of Ventura, *2005 Administrative Policy Manual*, Chapter VIII (A) "Employment & Recruitment," <http://docushare/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-13319/Chapter%20VIII%20A%20-05%20Employee%20Selection.pdf> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-06.** County of Ventura, Human Resources homepage [link], *A Resolution of the Board of Supervisors Which Describes the Personnel Rules and Regulations for Employees of the County of Ventura*, December 15, 1992, [http://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/HR/docs/Personnel\\_Rules\\_11.20.12.pdf](http://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/HR/docs/Personnel_Rules_11.20.12.pdf) (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-07.** County of Ventura, *Management, Confidential Clerical and Other Unrepresented Employees Resolution*, August 2013, [http://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/HR/MOA/docs/Management\\_Resolution\\_August\\_2013.pdf](http://vcportal.ventura.org/CEO/HR/MOA/docs/Management_Resolution_August_2013.pdf) (accessed May 8, 2015).
- Ref-08.** County of Ventura website, "County Executive Office" page, "Divisions" pulldown menu, <http://www.ventura.org/county-executive-office> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-09.** County of Ventura, Human Resources homepage, <http://www.ventura.org/human-resources> (accessed September 18, 2014).
- Ref-10.** County of Ventura, Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, January 13, 2015, Item 67, <http://www.ventura.org/bos-archives/agendas-documents-and-broadcasts> (accessed May 26, 2015).
- Ref-11.** County of Ventura, Human Resources website, "Common Recruitment and Examination Questions" page,

- <http://www.ventura.org/human-resources/common-recruitment-and-examination-questions> (accessed April 30, 2015).
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- Ref-13.** County of Ventura, “Civil Services Commission” page, “Appeals of Adverse Decisions and Procedures in Examinations and Promotions by Nomination,” <http://www.ventura.org/civil-service-commission/what-we-do> (accessed May 15, 2015).
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## **Attachments**

- Att-01.** Excerpts from *Personnel Rules and Regulations for Employees of the County of Ventura* that Clarify the Use of Lists

## **Glossary**

<b><u>TERM</u></b>	<b><u>DEFINITION</u></b>
Affirmative Action	Policies originally designed to provide historically underrepresented ethnic and cultural groups with equal access to education and jobs; in practice this led to “reverse discrimination” whereby these groups enjoyed a definite advantage over other groups—a practice considered by many to be unconstitutional; now outlawed in California
Allocated position	An individual position that has gone through a process assigning it to a job classification
Appointing authority	“[A] person having the power and authority to make appointments to County service and shall be an elected or appointive head of a County agency/department or their representative”; also known as the “hiring authority”
At-will employment	“[A] term used in U.S. labor law for contractual relationships in which an employee can be dismissed by an employer for any reason (that is, without having to establish ‘just cause’ for termination), and without warning.”– <i>Google</i>
Best practices	“A method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means....”– <i>BusinessDictionary.com</i>
BOS	Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Certified	Has gone through application screening and passed qualifying examinations
County	Ventura County, California
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity; a “practice where employers do not...discriminate against an applicant or employee on the basis of race, age, color, sex, religion, or national origin.” – <i>Google</i>
EEOC	The US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Elected employees	In Ventura County, the assessor, auditor-controller, clerk-recorder, sheriff, treasurer-tax collector, district attorney, and supervisors
Extra-help employee	A person employed for temporary work on a day-to-day basis

<b><u>TERM</u></b>	<b><u>DEFINITION</u></b>
FY	Fiscal Year (in the County, July 1 through June 30)
Grand Jury	2014-2015 Ventura County (Civil) Grand Jury
Hiring authority	The person who has the authority to hire; usually a manager, director, or executive; also known as the “appointing authority”
HR	Human resources; an umbrella term for employee-related functions such as recruiting, screening, testing, hiring, training, setting salaries and wages, promoting, and administering benefits programs
HRD	The Human Resources Division of Ventura County, a division of the County Executive Office
Intermittent employee	A person who works periodically or for a fluctuating portion of the full-time work schedule; often related to holidays or other significant times of year
Kaizen	“[A] Japanese philosophy that focuses on continual improvement...Kaizen aims to eliminate waste in all systems of an organization through improving standardized activities and processes...When done correctly, the process humanizes the workplace, eliminates overly hard work, and teaches people how to spot and eliminate waste in business processes... <i>Kaizen events</i> bring together a group of process owners and managers to map out an existing process and identify improvements that are within the scope of the participants.”– <i>iSixSigma.com</i>
Lean Six Sigma	The main methodology used to fulfill the County’s Service Excellence Program; “ <i>Lean</i> can be defined as a management approach that seeks to maximize value while removing wasteful activities and practices. <i>Six Sigma</i> can be defined as a management approach that seeks to systematically apply scientific principles to reduce variation and eliminate defects in service offerings.”– <i>County’s “Service Excellence” webpage</i>

<b><u>TERM</u></b>	<b><u>DEFINITION</u></b>
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement; “a written document describing a cooperative relationship between two parties wishing to work together on a project or to meet an agreed upon objective. An MOA serves as a legal document and describes the terms and details of the partnership agreement.”– <i>Google</i>
NeoGov	Web-based human resources software for the public sector that automates hiring, training, and performance-evaluation processes and streamlines related paperwork; used by most of the State’s 58 counties
Optimum-census employees	Health Care Agency employees needed to provide staffing when the workload fluctuates due to changes in the number of patients
Per-diem employee	An employee who works on an as-needed basis with a flexible schedule and no benefits (literally “by the day”)
<i>Personnel Rules and Regulations</i>	<i>A Resolution of the Board of Supervisors Which Describes the Personnel Rules and Regulations for Employees of the County of Ventura (see Ref-03)</i>
Regular employee	“[O]ne who has been appointed from an eligible list to an allocated position in the County service.”– <i>County HR website</i>
SME	Subject matter expert; a person who builds an area of specialized knowledge through study, training, and experience
State	State of California
Student worker	An extra-help employee who may be employed for more than 90 days in any fiscal year; must show student credentials

**Attachment 01**

**Excerpts from *Personnel Rules and Regulations*  
for *Employees of the County of Ventura*  
that Clarify the Use of Lists**

**Excerpts from *Personnel Rules and Regulations*  
for Employees of the County of Ventura  
that Clarify the Use of Lists**

**Sec. 225 Eligible List:** A list of persons by classification who have qualified through examination for appointment.

- A. 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.
- B. Agency/Department List - A list of employees in an agency/department qualified by examination for promotional appointment to a position in the department/agency. To remain on an agency/departmental list, a person must hold status within the County service. For persons on an agency/departmental eligible list who do not currently hold status in the agency/department, such persons shall have their names certified for selection only if the regular position to be filled is vacant.
- C. Countywide List - A list of County employees qualified by examination for promotional appointment to a position in a department/agency. To remain on the Countywide list, a person must hold status within the County service.
- D. Re-employment List - A list for each classification of persons eligible for re-employment.
- E. Reinstatement List - A list for each classification of persons eligible for reinstatement.
- F. Open List - A list of persons qualified for employment in a classification as a result of an open examination.

**Sec. 702 Order of Eligibles:** Eligibles on open, Countywide promotional, and agency/departmental promotional lists shall be ranked in order of their final examination scores.

**Sec. 518 Standings:** Final examination scores inclusively of 95% to 100% shall fall in Standing No 1; scores from 90% to 94% shall fall in Standing No. 2; scores from 85% to 89% shall fall in Standing No. 3; scores from 80% to 84% shall fall in Standing No. 4; scores from 75% to 79% shall fall in Standing No. 5; scores from 70% to 74% shall fall in Standing No. 6.

**Sec. 706 Priority of Lists:** The order of priority of eligible lists for certification to an appointing authority shall be:

- Classification Reinstatement List;
- Re-employment List;
- Agency/Department Promotional List;
- Countywide Promotional List;
- County Service Reinstatement List;
- Apprentice/Work Training Lists; and
- Open List.

**Sec. 714 Transfer:** As an alternative to appointment from an eligible list, a position may be filled by transfer. All transfers must have the written approval of the appointing authorities concerned and the Director-Human Resources. Transfer is a change from one public agency to another or from one department to another in the same or similar classifications. It is also a change from one class to a similar class within a department or agency. A person so transferred must meet the employment standards for the classification.