

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



**2010
Hiring Reform Action Plan
at the
U.S Office
of
Personnel Management**

September 2010

A New Day for the Civil Service

Hiring Reform at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management

In July 2009, OPM established an internal Hiring Reform SWAT Team consisting of representatives from across OPM Divisions and Offices as well as Human Resources staff. The Team assessed OPM's internal hiring process against the framework of the Governmentwide End-to-End Hiring Roadmap; identified barriers the Agency faced in achieving the components of the roadmap and its associated timeframes; analyzed root causes of the barriers; and identified improvement initiatives and strategies to address barriers in a Hiring Improvement Action Plan.

During the past year, OPM managers and Human Resources staff have worked aggressively to implement the actions specified in our Hiring Improvement Action Plan. These actions and activities have established a foundation which we are continuing to build upon to fully achieve the goals of the President's initiative to improve the Federal recruitment and hiring process. Below, we detail some of the accomplishments and results we have achieved thus far. In the attached "2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan" we identify additional steps that we will take to further improve the hiring process at our Agency.

The goals of the President's initiative are straightforward – make it easier for Americans to apply for Federal jobs, raise the bar on candidate quality, get hiring managers involved and hold them accountable for results, and take a common-sense approach to the overall hiring process. In both our leadership role as the Government's human resources agency, and as a Federal agency with its own internal hiring needs and challenges, we strive to serve as a model in achieving the President's vision of a streamlined and effective Federal recruitment and hiring process.

Accomplishments

As of the end of third quarter FY 2010, we achieved the following results:

- ***Streamlined job opportunity announcements.*** We eliminated confusing and redundant language, and improved instructions for job seekers in our job opportunity announcements (JOA's). In August 2009, we successfully streamlined JOA's for all positions Agencywide to no more than 3 pages (far exceeding the Governmentwide goal of five pages for the agency's top ten occupations by 12/15/09).
- ***Eliminated KSA narratives as requirement for the initial application process.*** In August 2009, we eliminated the requirement for KSA narratives as part of the initial application process. We enhanced our task/competency-based questionnaires to improve the assessment process, and expanded the use of other assessment techniques, such as scored structured interviews and multi-hurdle assessments in which only applicants who meet specified threshold requirements are subject to subsequent phases of the assessment process (vs. subjecting all applicants to the same assessment process regardless of whether they are well qualified or just minimally qualified.) These enhancements in the application process contributed to an 11% increase in applicant satisfaction with the job application process over FY 2009 levels.

- ***Reduced time to hire (delegated examining hires).*** We reduced our overall average time to hire (80-day model) by seven days in FY 2010 year-to-date. We also achieved significant improvements in timeliness in key components of the hiring process, including announcing 92% of our jobs within the 10-day standard (compared to 75% in FY 2009 and 64% in FY 2008), and issuing 92% of certificates within the 15-day standard (compared to 78% in FY 2009 and 67% in FY 2008).
- ***Improved management satisfaction.*** We achieved increases in manager satisfaction by improving communications between the Human Resources staff and the hiring manager to better clarify expectations, responsibilities, and anticipated timeframes for each component of the hiring process (7% increase in managers' satisfaction with having information needed to make effective decisions; 5% increase in satisfaction with applicant quality and timeliness of certificate; 8% increase in satisfaction with HR supported provided; and a 6% increase in overall satisfaction over FY 2009 levels)
- ***Improved applicants' ability to check status of job applications by integrating with USAJOBS.*** We were one of the first agencies to fully integrate with USAJOBS to allow for one-stop applicant notification through that system at the four key stages of the hiring process (vs. requiring applicants to log into various back-end systems to check status).
- ***Enhanced the new hire experience through a "Seven Touch Point" communication plan.*** We implemented a comprehensive action plan to ensure ongoing and consistent communications with newly selected employees. These communications help new hires navigate through the pre-employment process (e.g., security investigations), through onboarding (e.g., what to expect on the first day with OPM), and beyond the new employee orientation to ensure that new employees have timely and pertinent information, as well as a friendly welcome to the Agency.
- ***Sponsored supervisory training.*** We re-vamped our supervisory training course on recruitment and hiring to raise supervisors' awareness of the hiring process and associated timelines, recruiting options and special hiring authorities, interviewing techniques, and effective employee onboarding. We also sponsored quarterly forums for newly-hired supervisors to familiarize them with processes and requirements for recruiting and hiring within the Agency.
- ***Enhanced time-to-hire tracking system.*** We enhanced our ability to track discrete components of the end-to-end hiring process by expanding our tracking system for hiring actions. This improved our ability to track that deadlines and suspenses were being met, hold appropriate parties responsible and accountable for actions, and provide the data necessary to pin-point areas for improvement in our overall hiring process.

The above accomplishments reflect our commitment to addressing barriers that impede the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of the hiring process within our Agency. With continued focus on identifying and addressing barriers and their root causes, coupled with strategic and tactical actions to address the identified challenges, we will further advance toward achieving the President's vision for Federal hiring reform.

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan

Hiring Reform Initiative: 1. Eliminate essay-style questions.	Date: 9-9-2010
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: N/A – Essay style questions were fully eliminated from the initial application process in August 2009	
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): N/A	
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below: KSA essay style questions are eliminated as part of the initial application process.	
Primary Action Planning Team N/A Lead: Members:	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
No action required; KSA narratives were eliminated as a requirement for the initial application process for all positions in August 2009. Additional assessment methods were developed to supplement our standard approach of competency/task-based rating schedules (e.g., use of scored structured interviews; multi-hurdle approach which limited initial application requirements to assess minimum qualification requirements only, followed by further assessment of candidates who met threshold requirements).	Target: 100% of job opportunity announcements do not require submission of KSA narratives as part of the initial application. This target has been achieved, but continued compliance will be verified through annual audits.	Implemented in August 2009		

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan

Hiring Reform Initiative: 2. Allow candidates to submit résumés and cover letters supported by reliable assessment tools.	Date: 9-9-2010
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: N/A - Résumé and cover letter method was implemented in August 2009	
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): N/A	
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below: 100% of recruit actions allow candidates to apply using a résumé and optional cover letter.	
Primary Action Planning Team N/A Lead: Members:	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
No action required; all applicants may apply using a résumé with a format of their choosing, along with an optional cover letter.	Target: 100% of recruit actions allow candidates to apply using a résumé and optional cover letter. This target has been achieved, but continued compliance will be verified through annual audits.	Implemented in August 2009	N/A	N/A

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan

Hiring Reform Initiative: 3. Use Category Rating	Date: 9-9-2010
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: We have implemented the use of Category Rating for all Delegated Examining recruitment actions. The use of Category Rating has encountered resistance from some HR staff and hiring managers, who may be reluctant to subscribe to an approach that is currently viewed as non-traditional.	
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): Five-Why Analysis revealed the following root causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing Agency Category Rating policy was overly complex and confusing to HR practitioners and hiring managers. • Most HR staff were comfortable with long-standing traditional rating and ranking procedures, and the change to Category Rating as the primary rating/ranking method required a shift in the cultural mindset, as well as proper training and experience that can demonstrate the benefits and advantages of the approach. 	
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below: Category Rating is used effectively and 100% of the time for Delegated Examining recruitment actions.	
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Recruiting & Staffing Managers Members: HR Team Leads	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Streamline and clarify Category Rating policy and procedures.	Updated Category Rating policy.	Completed August 2010	HR DAD	N/A
Ensure staff is fully trained in Category Rating procedures.	Refresher training and internal procedure training.	Completed August 2010	R&S Managers	N/A
Implement Category Rating for all Delegated Examining recruitment actions, and hold HR staff and managers accountable through performance requirements.	Category Rating is used for 100% of DE recruitment actions.	Completed August 2010	N/A	N/A
Assess compliance through Human Capital Accountability reviews.	Annual review shows that Category Rating is used for 100% of DE recruitment actions, (reported in HCMR).	7-1-10/ 12-15-10	HR Accountability Staff	N/A

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan Directions

Hiring Reform Initiative:	Date: 9-9-2010
4. Ensure manager responsibility and accountability in hiring process.	
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hiring managers and HR sometimes fail to communicate effectively, resulting in lack of clarity of roles/responsibilities, timelines and due dates, etc. Hiring managers are often not as fully engaged as they could be in the end-to-end hiring process, and some view hiring as an HR function. Hiring managers, on average, exceed the time standard for reviewing the referral certificate and notifying HR of the selection (FY 10 average is 32 days – E2E time standard is 15 days) resulting in delays in the overall hiring timeline. 	
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?):	
Five-Why Analysis revealed the following root causes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic conversations between HR Staff and hiring managers to review timelines and responsibilities are not consistently occurring. Managers sometimes lack information about key processes/roles/responsibilities/hiring flexibilities. Managerial performance requirements are not clear regarding hiring responsibilities/accountability. 	
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below:	
Strategic meetings/consultation between HR and hiring managers are robust and occur consistently. Managers are fully informed concerning roles/responsibilities, workforce planning, hiring options and timelines through strategic conversations with HR and through training/guidance. Clear performance measures are outlined in managerial performance plans.	
Primary Action Planning Team	
Lead: Recruiting & Staffing Manager and Management & Employee Services Manager	
Members: Training Staff, HR Team Leads, Performance Management Staff	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Issue a directive from the CHCO requiring that HR staff and the relevant hiring official(s) must have a strategic consultation before any recruitment action is initiated.	Meaningful and productive strategic meetings with managers (<u>Key Measure:</u> 100% of staffing records contain documented/signed Hiring Timeline & Agreement)	by 9-30-10	CHCO	N/A

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Enhance managerial training/outreach.	Targeted manager fact sheets (e.g., workforce planning, category rating, interviewing techniques, effective recruitment/outreach, etc.) and key topics are incorporated into existing supervisory training courses; supervisors participate in hiring reform training opportunities. (<u>Key Measures</u> : Manager communications are issued at least quarterly; 5% improvement in relevant CHCO Management Satisfaction Survey items over FY 09)	8-1-10/ and ongoing	HR DAD	N/A
Modify performance plan requirements for all supervisors/managers/executives.	Hiring Reform metrics are included in managerial performance plans (<u>Key Measure</u> : 100% of performance plans for SES, managers, and supervisors contain relevant performance requirements for the FY 11 rating cycle)	by 10-1-10	HR DAD – OPM rating officials	Director's approval to establish new corporate performance commitment in all SES, managerial, and supervisory performance plans.

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan Directions

Hiring Reform Initiative:

Date: 9-9-2010

5. Improve quality and speed of the hiring process.

Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed:

- Workload has increased significantly as the volume of applications has reached unprecedented levels, which can result in delays in processing times for HR staff. Without additional resources, HR needs to come up with ways to “work smarter” to accommodate workload.
- Hiring managers sometimes do not comply with hiring timelines, engage fully in the recruitment/hiring process, or think strategically about hiring decisions (e.g., workforce planning, diversity, etc.)
- Data regarding the timeliness and quality of the hiring process such as management satisfaction and time to hire is not effectively informing continuous improvement.
- Tools and tracking systems to monitor certain aspects of the hiring and onboarding process are cumbersome and inefficient.

Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?):

Five-Why Analysis revealed the following root causes:

- HR staff are not fully capitalizing on opportunities to automate and streamline processes or adopt best practices that can possibly contribute to improved quality, timeliness, and workload management.
- Hiring managers do not have a clear understanding of roles/responsibilities/timelines/expectations. Managers’ role in recruitment is not well understood nor sometimes well-executed. Hiring flexibilities are not always fully exploited. Most hiring is “replacement hiring” without thinking about “strategy”. Managers generally do not have access to key demographic data about their workforce that could be useful in making strategic workforce decisions.
- Feedback loops (e.g., sharing management satisfaction data with the appropriate servicing HR staff; or sharing data with senior management about their organization’s performance in complying with hiring timelines) are not in place so the data can be used to inform improvements.
- Tools to track real-time status during the process are not integrated and sufficiently automated; therefore reminders to selectees to submit security paperwork, or reminders to hiring managers about due dates, etc. must all be done manually, whereas better use of automation could enhance efficiency.

Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below:

10% reduction in average time to hire by end of FY 11; 5% increase in management satisfaction.

Primary Action Planning Team This team is accountable for an action plan that addresses the overall desired outcome. Secondary teams may be assembled to address specific tasks that are required to achieve the desired outcome.

Lead: Recruiting & Staffing Managers

Members: Systems developers for automated staffing system and CHRIS; Recruiting & Staffing Staff; IT staff; OPM hiring managers

Action Steps

Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Exploit automated staffing system functionality and improve processes (e.g., by sharing best practices or short-cuts among HR staff). Work with systems developers to enhance functionality in automated staffing system and HR data system.	Template library for valid assessments and streamlined vacancy announcements. Enhanced reporting capability from staffing and HR data systems. Collaboration among HR specialists to share best practices.	9-1-10/ ongoing	R&S Managers	N/A
Educate managers on importance of recruitment. Train supervisors on hiring flexibilities (e.g., excepted appointing authorities for disabled, veterans, etc.) and support recruitment with updated corporate recruiting materials.	Increased use of hiring flexibilities and improved recruitment (<u>Key Measures</u> : increased representation of veterans and disabled; 10% reduction in average time-to-hire; 5% increase in management satisfaction)	9-1-10/ 3-31-11 and ongoing	HR DAD, all hiring managers	N/A
Develop and acquire tools to easily and accurately measure and report real-time relevant data to managers and HR staff (e.g., strategic workforce data, performance data relating to timeliness of individual recruitment actions).	Periodic “dashboard” is provided to each organization presenting key demographic data. Detailed reports are used by HR Specialists to track performance of each recruitment action. Follow-up reminder notices are provided to hiring managers at key stages of the hiring process.	10-31-10/ ongoing	HR DAD	N/A
Coordinate with Divisions to develop documented workforce/staffing plans for each organization.	Move from “replacement hiring” to a more strategic approach in each Division (<u>Key Measure</u> : 100% of Divisions have documented staffing plans in place by the end of FY 11)	6-1-10/ 9-30-11	HR and representatives from each Division and Office	HR staff to coordinate workforce planning efforts
Implement a standardized approach to disseminating the CHCO Manager Satisfaction Survey to improve response rate (i.e., direct contact by HR specialist at conclusion of hiring effort).	Improved response rate to CHCO Management Survey (<u>Key Measure</u> : 10% improvement in response rate)	9-15-10/ 10-1-10	R&S Manager, and HR Team Leads	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Develop an automated on-boarding 'tickler' system to automatically remind selectees of timeframes/due dates. Work with systems personnel in pilot to automate process.	Selectees return required on-boarding documents/fingerprints in a timely manner. (Key Measures: 10% reduction in average time-to-hire; improved satisfaction among new employees measured by survey [target = 85%])	by 3-31-11	HR-IT	N/A

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan Directions

Hiring Reform Initiative:	Date: 9-9-2010
6. Notify applicants at key stages in the application process.	
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: Applicant notifications are currently sent at all required touchpoints. However, applicants are sometimes confused by the notices they receive, resulting in phone calls to HR staff and applicant dissatisfaction.	
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): Five-Why Analysis revealed that the language used in some of the notifications is not as clear as it could be. In addition, the programming in our automated staffing system results in multiple and redundant notifications in cases where applicants apply for multiple grade levels, locations, etc. – which can be confusing to applicants (e.g., multiple notices are generated informing the applicant s/he is qualified or has been referred for some grade levels but not others).	
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of action steps below: Simple, concise, and timely notification of all applicants.	
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Recruiting & Staffing Manager Members: Team Leads, staff, System IT staff	

Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Work with current system capability to create clearer, plain language applicant notification messages using a simplified notification process.	Simplify language and provide clearer notification information. (<u>Key Measure</u> : increased applicant satisfaction [target = 90%])	8-1-10/ 10-31-10	R&S Manager	N/A
Work with automated staffing system IT personnel to provide input for development of better system notification capability.	More efficient notification process through elimination of redundant applicant notifications. (<u>Key Measure</u> : increased applicant satisfaction [target = 90%])	8-1-10/ 3-31-11	R&S Manager	N/A



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