Establish Goals and Develop Better Data to Improve Hiring Process Timeliness

Office of the City Auditor

21st Floor, City Hall
414 East 12th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

(816) 513-3300
Fax: (816) 513-3305

April 15, 2024

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

This audit of the city's hiring process focuses on how quickly the city fills vacant positions once hiring departments submit requests to fill these positions. A slow hiring process could contribute to lost opportunities to hire qualified applicants and delays in city services. We reviewed the Human Resources Department's hiring process, available hiring data, and developed milestones and time estimates for the hiring process.
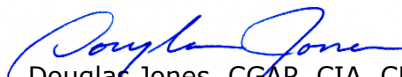
The city's hiring process likely takes longer than desired. Our analysis shows it took city departments an average of 151 days to fill positions between May 2022 and October 2023. A Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) benchmarking report identified a public sector "time-to-fill" average of 62 days. Although data to make an exact comparison to the SHRM benchmark was not available and there are differences in how these measures are calculated, supporting work we completed provides the city a general benchmark to compare against and a starting point for self-evaluation.

The Human Resources Department has not established milestones to track within the hiring process or timeliness goals for the hiring process. SHRM's benchmarking study identifies hiring process milestones and we also developed hiring process milestones and timeframes based on the department's process and available hiring data. The department can use these to help establish hiring process milestones and timeliness goals for the city.

The Human Resources Department collects recruitment and hiring data from multiple sources and stores this data in separate, unlinked excel spreadsheets. This has resulted in data that is not reliable to track the timeliness of the city's hiring process efficiently or accurately. Without reliable data, HR cannot effectively track and monitor the hiring process.

We make recommendations to establish milestones, goals, and improve hiring data to efficiently track these goals to help ensure HR can evaluate the timeliness of the hiring process. We also recommend strengthening communication and training resources with departments about the hiring process. Implementation of the recommendations should help improve the timeliness of the city's hiring process.

The draft report was sent to the director of human resources on March 22, 2024, for review and comment. Her response is appended. We would like to thank staff and management in the Human Resources Department for their assistance and cooperation during this audit. The audit team for this project was Beth Pauley and Sue Polys.

Douglas Jones, CGAP, CIA, CRMA
City Auditor

Establish Goals and Develop Better Data to Improve Hiring Process Timeliness

Table of Contents

List of Exhibits

Introduction

Audit Objective

Does the city fill vacant positions timely after hiring departments submit requests to fill vacant positions?

Our audit of the timeliness of the recruitment and hiring process focuses on how quickly the city fills vacant positions once hiring departments submit requests to fill these positions. To answer our objective, we interviewed Human Resources management and shadowed staff, reviewed department policies to understand the recruitment and hiring process, evaluated hiring data from May 2022 to October 2023, and reviewed recommended practices.

We conducted this audit in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

See Appendix A for more information about the audit objective, scope, methodology, and compliance with standards.

Background

Hiring Process

The Human Resources Department (HR) develops and manages the city's recruitment and hiring process. In fiscal year 2023, departments hired 640 employees. The hiring process is shared between Human Resources and hiring departments. (See Exhibit 1, p. 2.). Some positions require approval by the Position Review Committee (PRC) before they go through the hiring process.[1]

Departments initiate the hiring process with HR using either the Job Opening Request Form or the Existing List Request Form available on the city's internal website, SharePoint. The Existing List Request Form provides departments with a list of applicants HR already certified as eligible for a position.

---

[1] On August 16, 2023, the city manager announced requests to fill all budgeted positions are exempt from the need to obtain PRC approval. This did not impact our audit because the PRC data we analyzed ranged from May 2022 – July 2023.

Exhibit 1: City's Hiring Process

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Department has a vacant      │
│ position it wants to fill    │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department submits request   │
│ to fill to PRC (if required) │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ PRC reviews and approves (or │
│ denies) request             │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department submits Job       │
│ Opening Request Form or      │
│ Existing List Request to HR  │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR posts job                 │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR screens/auto screens      │
│ applicants                   │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR completes screening and   │
│ sends applicant list to      │
│ department                   │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department conducts          │
│ applicant interviews         │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department selects applicant │
│ and makes conditional offer  │
│ pending background check     │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department submits New       │
│ Applicant Prescreening       │
│ Form to HR                   │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR initiates background      │
│ check process                │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR notifies department of    │
│ background check results     │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department finalizes offer   │
│ with applicant and identifies│
│ start date                   │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ Department notifies HR when  │
│ applicant would like to start│
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ HR finalizes start date with │
│ applicant                    │
├─────────────────────────────┤
│ New employee's first day     │
│ Vacant position filled       │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Sources: Human Resources records, PeopleSoft HRIS, and City Auditor's Office analysis.

When a department completes the Job Opening Request Form, HR uses this information to advertise the position to applicants. HR reviews, screens, and sends a list of certified applicants back to the department.[2] The department may then conduct interviews and select applicants to hire.

When departments are ready to hire an applicant, they send the New Hire Prescreening Request Form to HR. HR contacts the applicant to begin the background check, and if applicable, drug screening or physical. If the applicant passes the background check, the department receives notification that the required items have been received. The hiring supervisor then contacts the applicant to confirm an agreed upon start date and sends the start date and starting salary to HR. Lastly, HR schedules the new employee's orientation, coordinates new employee paperwork, and issues an employee ID.

The Society for Human Resources Management

The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) is a professional human resources association that serves the needs of human resource professionals and advances the practice of human resource management.

SHRM conducted a benchmarking survey of public agencies recruitment and hiring timeliness.[3] This self-reported data provides organizations with information they can use to evaluate their own processes and make improvements. We used the benchmarking survey results as a basis of comparison against available data in the city's hiring process.

---

[2] In July 2023, HR implemented automated screening for applicants. See Appendix B for more information on this change.

[3] Society for Human Resources Management, *SHRM Benchmarking: Talent Access Report-Government Sector*, 2022.

Findings and Recommendations

Improve Hiring Process Timeliness by Setting Goals and Developing Better Data

Human Resources Can Take Steps to Establish Hiring Process Milestones and Goals

City
'Request to Fill'
To
'Start Date'

Avg. Days
151

SHRM Benchmark
'Request to Fill'
To
'Job Accepted'

Avg. Days
62

The City's hiring process likely takes longer than desired. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reports an average "time to fill" of 62 days for non-executive positions (70 days for executive positions) in the public sector. "Time to fill" measures the number of days from the time a job requisition is created to when an applicant accepts an offer. An efficient hiring process attracts quality applicants and helps ensure city services run smoothly. Without a timely hiring process, the city may miss out on hiring interested applicants. This could cause some city services to be understaffed.

After a department submitted a Job Opening Request Form to start the hiring process, it took an average of 151 days for a new employee to start.[4] While this measure is slightly different than SHRM's time to fill, it is a reasonable comparison to use when considered with additional data shown in Exhibit 2 (p.4). See Appendix B for more information about how we calculated this timeframe.
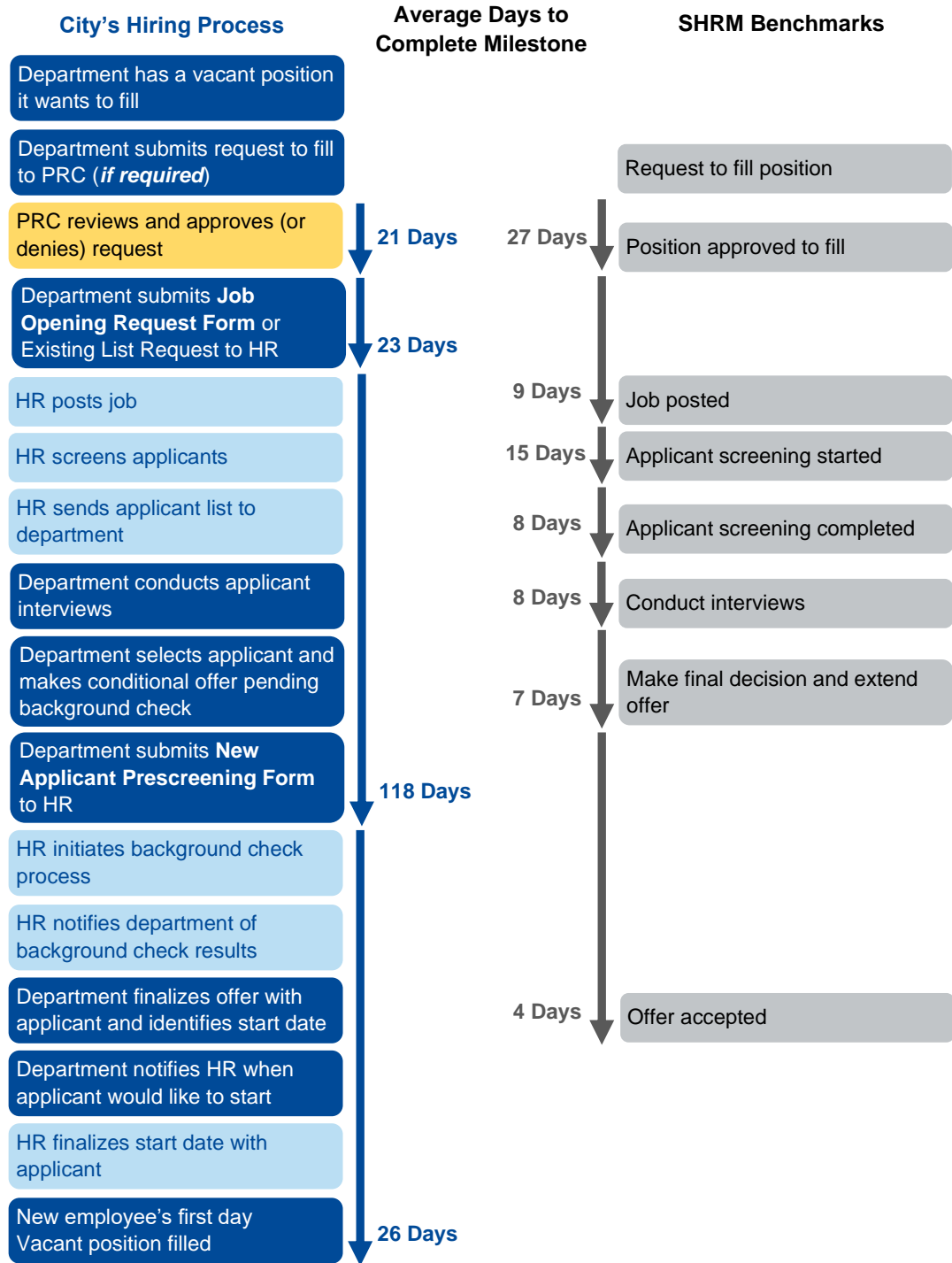
The Human Resources Department has not established hiring milestones to track or documented timeliness goals for the hiring process. SHRM has identified hiring milestones to help public agencies evaluate their hiring process. (See Exhibit 2.) These milestones can be used as a tool to help the city establish hiring timeliness goals. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommends government organizations develop performance measures or goals to monitor service delivery.[5]

Compared to SHRM's benchmark survey, the city generally takes longer to complete hiring process milestones. While SHRM's benchmark milestones differ slightly from the milestones we developed based on the city's available data, they can be used for general comparison for how long the city takes to complete parts of the process. (See Exhibit 2.) SHRM's milestones can also help identify additional milestones the city should track.

---

[4] HR does not capture the date when the applicant accepts an offer used in the 'time to fill' measure, so we used the next available data point of the Employee Start Date to make a similar comparison.

[5] The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) represents public finance officials throughout the US and Canada.

Exhibit 2: City's Hiring Process Compared to SHRM Benchmarks

City's Hiring Process	Average Days to Complete Milestone	SHRM Benchmarks
Department has a vacant position it wants to fill		
Department submits request to fill to PRC (*if required*)		Request to fill position
PRC reviews and approves (or denies) request	21 Days / 27 Days	Position approved to fill
Department submits **Job Opening Request Form** or Existing List Request to HR	23 Days	
HR posts job	9 Days	Job posted
HR screens applicants	15 Days	Applicant screening started
HR sends applicant list to department	8 Days	Applicant screening completed
Department conducts applicant interviews	8 Days	Conduct interviews
Department selects applicant and makes conditional offer pending background check	7 Days	Make final decision and extend offer
Department submits **New Applicant Prescreening Form** to HR	118 Days	
HR initiates background check process		
HR notifies department of background check results		
Department finalizes offer with applicant and identifies start date	4 Days	Offer accepted
Department notifies HR when applicant would like to start		
HR finalizes start date with applicant		
New employee's first day Vacant position filled	26 Days	

Sources: Human Resources records, PeopleSoft HRIS, Society for Human Resource Management, and City Auditor's Office analysis.

Although HR and hiring departments each have responsibilities for completing various parts of the hiring process, the City Charter gives Human Resources the responsibility and authority to manage the city's overall hiring process.[6]

HR tracks some parts of the hiring process – the tasks completed by their department. HR also has informal internal timeliness targets for accomplishing these tasks. For example, HR tracks the time it takes to send departments a certified list of eligible applicants and the background check process. HR's target is to complete background checks within three days. This is a good start. HR needs to formalize these targets into goals, as well as account for the tasks that are outside of their direct control.

HR does not track any of the tasks performed by the hiring departments such as how long it takes to conduct interviews and then extend an offer to a selected applicant. While hiring data was not systematically tracked, we used information from unlinked spreadsheets and forms to calculate approximate averages of comparable SHRM milestones.

HR recently made changes to the hiring process intended to improve the timeliness of hiring. See Appendix C for more details. HR will not know the effectiveness of these changes without tracking and evaluating their impact. To do this, HR needs to establish the milestones to track, baseline data for the milestones, and set goals for improvement. This data will help HR understand process steps that are slower than desired. HR can then identify departments or specific positions that need additional resources to meet hiring timeliness goals.

Recommendation
To help the city manage the timeliness of the hiring process, the director of human resources should establish:

- individual Human Resources and hiring department milestones within the hiring process to track
- formal goals for timely completion of the entire hiring process as well as each milestone being tracked.

---

[6] Charter of Kansas City, Missouri, Article IV, Sec. 406.

Human Resources Data Not Linked or Reliable for Reporting on Hiring Timeliness

The quality of Human Resources' data limits the reliability of reports on hiring timeliness.[7] Reliable data helps ensure accurate and timely reporting along with quality communication and information to make informed decisions. Bad data could lead to inaccurate or misleading information. For example, management reported it takes an estimated 84 days for departments to fill a position. Our analysis of positions filled between May 2022 and October 2023 indicates it takes an average of 151 days from the time a department submits a job opening request to an employee's first day.

Human Resources is unable to track a position from initial job opening request through the steps of the hiring process. Human Resources needs complete and connected quality data to monitor the timeliness of the city's hiring process. Currently, HR collects recruitment and hiring information from multiple sources and stores this data in separate excel spreadsheets. Not all of these spreadsheets contain common fields with unique identifiers to link data they are collecting. (See Exhibit 3.)

Exhibit 3: Human Resources Hiring Spreadsheets and Data Fields

Data Source	Job Opening ID	Position Number	Position Title	Dept ID
Job Opening Request Form (SharePoint)		X	X	X
Existing List Request Form (SharePoint)		X	X	X
Recruitment Ads Spreadsheet	X		X	
Recruitment Tracking Spreadsheet			X	
New Application Pre-Screening (Initiates Background Check) Form (SharePoint)	X	X	X	
Pre-Employment (Background Check Tracking) Spreadsheet			X	

Source: Human Resources SharePoint forms and tracking spreadsheets and City Auditor's Office Analysis.

Separate data tables need common fields so the data can be joined for summarizing. The Job Opening Request Forms contain a Position Number that the department is trying to hire, but HR is

---

[7] Note, we were able to estimate hiring averages by manually linking unconnected databases and performing time consuming data cleaning tasks. This method of data review is not suitable for dashboard summaries.

Job Opening Request (Sept 2023-Dec 2023)

Hi, Suzanne. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

* Required

1. Today's date *

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

2. Job posting Title *

Enter your answer

3. Position number(s) *

Enter your answer

4. Supervisor Requesting Job Opening *

Enter your answer

5. Dept ID (should be a 6 digit number i.e. 121000) *

Enter your answer

6. Has this position been approved by PRC? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ I have an exemption

7. Date of PRC approval or exemption *

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

8. Is this position vacant *

○ Yes

○ No

○ No, but it will be by the time my positions posts

9. If the position is not vacant when will it be vacated?

Please input date (M/d/yyyy)

10. The department and division of this position *

Enter your answer

not using information from these forms for tracking. Though data is tracked for subsequent steps, this data cannot be linked to the initial Job Request Form because it frequently lacks the Position Number it is related to. (See Exhibit 3.) Without common fields, it is difficult to link segments of the hiring process into a complete timeline.

According to HR, the main barrier to streamlining the hiring data tracking and reporting is that the process is manual. HR uses PeopleSoft for some aspects of the hiring process, including job postings and, as of July 2023, automatically screening applicants. PeopleSoft might have capabilities that would allow HR to track data in a centralized system, but this would require a significant amount of time to develop according to HR. The city is also considering options for a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software system that could serve the same centralizing purpose. The decision on which system to use in the HR process will impact the city's ability to track timeliness. In the meantime, HR should improve their existing data to track the hiring process until another system is available.

Hiring data not reliable for accurate summary reporting.
Hiring department staff enter information into hiring forms and HR staff enter information into hiring spreadsheets used for tracking. Most of this information is manually entered with minimal data entry controls. For example, HR's Job Opening Request Form allows multiple entries into the Position Numbers field and does not use drop downs for department names. Lack of data entry controls resulted in records that contained incomplete fields and multiple entries in one submission that should-have been separated into individual records.

Databases and forms to collect data should use a variety of data entry controls such as those shown in Exhibit 4. These controls help ensure consistency and reduce errors caused by HR and hiring departments manually typing information into the database. Without data entry controls in the database, HR could continue to experience data reliability issues.

Exhibit 4: Common Controls for Data Entry

• Drop-Down Menus	• Prevent override of internal database calculations
• Logic checks on dates	
• Toggle options	• Data trees based on information entered
• Check boxes	
• Radio button lists	• Audit trail of database changes
• Date selection options	• Prompts or error messages

Source: *Law Department Database Improvements Can Assist Risk Management Program*, Office of the City Auditor, April 2020, p.7.

HR needs to develop manuals and procedures for data entry, including the department completed forms that HR could use to link to their final database. A database manual includes data dictionaries that define data fields. Data dictionaries help both data users and data input staff understand the expected information in a field. Further, written procedures help data entry staff understand when to update fields and where to get relevant information to be entered.

Once the database is developed, HR should include quality assurance processes to reduce errors in data. A quality assurance process includes periodically tracing records back to source material to ensure that complete data is accurately entered. A quality assurance process ensures controls are working as intended and procedures are followed as written. Identification of errors can help HR revise controls and procedures over time. Without this process, errors will compound over time.

Recommendation

To efficiently track the hiring process and report timeliness, the director of human resources should identify data needed to track the hiring process, develop a database for tracking, and implement a method to ensure the data is collected accurately.

Human Resources Can Improve Training and Communications to Departments

The Human Resources Department can improve their communications to departments about the city's hiring process. HR designs and operates the hiring process that departments use to fill their positions. Internal communication and training on the processes is critical to achieving an organization's goals. An organization needs to communicate information about their hiring process that is appropriate, current, complete, accurate, accessible, and provided on a timely basis. The information should be updated as the process changes.

HR uses SharePoint and e-mail to communicate updates about the hiring process to employees, but according to HR, many hiring supervisors are still confused about the process.

Human Resources should offer training about the administrative aspects of the hiring process. HR has not offered formal training about the administrative aspects of the hiring process to hiring supervisors since December 2021. Currently, HR offers a self-paced course for managers and supervisors called "conducting effective interviews". The training does not address the administrative components for the hiring process or how long it should take to interview and select new employees.

Recommendation   To ensure city staff and hiring supervisors/managers have information about the city's hiring processes and periodic changes, the director of human resources should provide training, resources, and updates about the hiring process to supervisors and managers.

Human Resources has not updated their Rules and Policy Manual since 2014. HR's Rules and Policy Manual ("Manual") should reflect the city's current human resources policies and practices. HR has created or updated many procedures, including those related to the hiring process since the Manual was last published in 2014. HR should regularly evaluate the Manual and revise as needed.

HR also has a Recruitment (Talent Acquisition Module) Notebook that is a working document. This document contains the current rules and procedures the talent acquisition team uses for their tasks related to the recruitment and hiring process.

HR has reported they are finalizing an updated Manual for all city staff. In addition to including updated or new procedures, HR should publish formalized timeliness goals for the hiring process once the goals are established, including:
- timing goals for the overall hiring process
- hiring milestones
- The department/party responsible for each milestone
- timing goals for each hiring milestone
- departments' administrative responsibilities for the hiring process.

The timeliness goals can be specifically included in the Manual or separate written procedures cross-referenced in the Manual. The updated resources will provide hiring departments with a reliable reference for their responsibilities and enable HR to hold hiring departments accountable.

Recommendation   To ensure city staff and hiring supervisors/managers have information about the city's hiring processes, the director of human resources should update the Human Resources Rules and Policy Manual to match current practices including the hiring process milestones and timeliness goals (explicitly or by reference).

Human Resources should check-in with departments during the hiring process. Human Resources does not have a system in place to communicate with departments once they send departments the certified list of eligible applicants. This leaves a gap of communication between when departments receive the certified applicants list to when departments notify HR that they selected an applicant. HR communicating with departments during this time could identify issues and find ways to speed up the process.

Department submits **Job Opening Request Form** or Existing List Request to HR

HR posts job

HR screens applicants

HR completes screening and sends applicant list to

Department conducts applicant interviews

Department selects applicant and makes conditional offer pending background check

Department submits **New Applicant Prescreening Form** to HR

118 Days

The third milestone we measured in our sample is from the date the departments initiated the hiring process to the date the departments make a hiring decision (New Applicant Prescreening Form). This milestone includes multiple steps that both HR and hiring departments are responsible for completing or require coordination. HR does not have sufficient data to track every task in this segment, such as how long it takes departments to conduct interviews or initiate the interview process. A timeliness goal for this milestone or even individual steps would give HR a prompt to check in with departments that are not meeting goals.

Hiring timeliness data by department indicates a wide range of hiring averages and hiring frequency between departments. (See Exhibit 5.) Some departments hire more often than others. Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Water Services have a high volume of hires compared to other departments. Conversely, there were some departments, such as Finance and Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity, who did not hire as often.

Exhibit 5: Average Days Between Job Opening Request to New Applicant Screening Request (May 1, 2022 – October 1, 2023)

Department	Average Days	Total Positions
City Planning and Development	158.2	19
Mayor and City Council	148.0	1
Municipal Court	138.5	6
Public Works	136.1	71
Finance	134.9	7
General Services	126.9	22
Parks & Recreation	122.9	91
Water Services	117.4	251
Neighborhood Services	101.1	7
Health	97.9	37
Housing & Community Development	95.0	7
City Manager	94.3	14
Fire Department	86.2	9[8]
Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity	69.3	3
Conventions & Entertainment Centers	67.8	4
Law	52.7	7
City Auditor	51.0	1
Human Resources	14.5	2
Grand Total	**118.2**	**559**

Source: Human Resource Records and City Auditor's Office analysis.

---

[8] Certain positions, such as firefighter, are hired every two years per the firefighter's collective bargaining agreement. Our sample did not include this hiring cycle.

10

Although some departments took much longer to hire than others, these departments' hiring activity indicate they were actively attempting to hire. Many departments completed multiple job requests (over five in some instances) before selecting an applicant they wanted to hire. This indicates their initial attempts were unsuccessful. Departments who hire often may experience additional burdens due to being short staff, including errors submitting hiring forms and delays completing their tasks in the hiring process. Conversely, departments who do not hire as often may not be familiar with the hiring process.

HR should check in with departments to determine what assistance departments need to address barriers to hiring timely. The need for assistance may be identified by departments with positions who are taking a long time to hire, departments submitting multiple job request forms for the same position, and departments that have a high volume of positions they are trying to fill. These check-ins can identify hiring process barriers and provide departments with additional resources as needed.

Recommendation To help departments who may be struggling to work through the hiring process in a timely manner, the director of human resources should implement a system to periodically communicate with departments and hiring supervisors/managers during the hiring process to provide additional guidance or assistance.

Recommendations

1. The director of human resources should establish individual Human Resources and hiring department milestones within the hiring process to track.

2. The director of human resources should establish formal goals for timely completion of the entire hiring process as well as each milestone being tracked.

3. The director of human resources should identify data needed to track the hiring process, develop a database for tracking, and implement a method to ensure the data is collected accurately.

4. The director of human resources should provide training, resources, and updates about the hiring process to supervisors and managers.

5. The director of human resources should update the Human Resources Rules and Policy Manual to match current practices including the hiring process milestones and timeliness goals (explicitly or by reference).

6. The director of human resources should implement a system to periodically communicate with departments and hiring supervisors/managers during the hiring process to provide additional guidance or assistance.

Appendix A: Objective, Scope and Methodology, and Compliance Statement

We conducted this performance audit of the timeliness of the city's hiring process under the authority of Article II, Section 216 of the Charter of Kansas City, Missouri, which establishes the Office of the City Auditor and outlines the city auditor's primary duties.

A performance audit provides "objective analysis, findings, and conclusions to assist management and those charged with governance and oversight with, among other things, improving program performance and operations, reducing costs, facilitating decision making by parties with responsibility for overseeing or initiating corrective action, and contributing to public accountability."[9]

Why We Did This Audit

City departments use Human Resources to advertise job openings. In fiscal year 2023, city departments hired 640 employees. The City Council and the public have expressed concerns that the city's hiring process takes too long. A slow hiring process could contribute to lost opportunities to hire qualified applicants, vacancies, and delays in city services. Because the hiring process impacts most city departments, evaluating it will help ensure the process is efficient and timely to recruit and hire qualified applicants.

Audit Objective

This report is designed to answer the following question(s):

- Does the city fill vacant positions timely after hiring departments submit requests to fill vacant positions?

Scope and Methodology

Our audit focuses on the timeliness of the city's hiring practices. Our audit methods included:

- Interviewing Human Resources management and staff to identify the recruitment and hiring process and to understand the roles departments and HR staff have along with their current practices.

---

[9] Comptroller General of the United States, *Government Auditing Standards* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2018), pp. 10, 11.

- Evaluating available hiring data from May 2022 to October 2023 to identify available milestone dates and unique identifiers to determine a way to track the timeliness of the data.

- Identifying milestones of the hiring process based on HR's data and calculating the average number of days these milestones take.

- Documenting HR's communication with departments about the recruitment and hiring process to evaluate how departments receive information about the process.

- Reviewing HR's training resources to understand the training departments receive about the recruitment and hiring process.

- Reviewing recommended practices on government hiring processes to determine how long the city's hiring process takes compared to peer organizations and how the city should capture the data they need to track.

Statement of Compliance with Government Auditing Standards

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. No information was omitted from this report because it was deemed confidential or sensitive.

We evaluated a potential threat to our independence related to this audit. City Code establishes the Human Resources Committee (HRC) comprised of the city manager (or designee), director of human resources, and the city auditor.[10] This committee makes determinations regarding hiring department requests for exceptions to certain hiring rules. We determined this does not create a significant management participation threat to independence or impair the independence of the city auditor or City Auditor's Office because it is a City Code requirement, the city auditor is one of three votes, and this audit is about the timeliness of the city's recruitment process not the HRC process.

---

[10] Code of Ordinances, Kansas City, Missouri, Sec. 2-1071.

Scope of Work on Internal Controls

We assessed internal controls relevant to the audit objective. This included reviewing HR's policies and procedures, analyzing various documents of HR's hiring process, and assessing HR's training and communication with departments. We identified internal control deficiencies related to each of these items. The details of these deficiencies are discussed in the body of the report.

Scope of Work on Data Reliability

We primarily worked with data provided by the Human Resources department. We assessed the reliability of hiring data by conducting reasonableness testing, comparing some data sets to original source data, reviewing existing information about the data, and interviewing staff knowledgeable about the data. We found some information in the source data was incomplete or inconsistent. Because the primary data point we needed was accurate position numbers, we researched the incomplete position numbers in PeopleSoft and were able to resolve some of these issues. Not all of them were able to be resolved. As a result, we had to exclude some of the records in the source data that did not have enough information for our analysis.

We determined that the data we used was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. We describe how we developed our database of hiring information, process milestones, and timeliness calculations in Appendix B.

Appendix B: City Auditor's Office Hiring Information Database, Timeliness Calculations, and Definitions

How the City Auditor's Office Developed a Database of Hiring Information

We developed a database by assembling data from various spreadsheets to identify the milestones that we were able to track with the best available data. We selected HR's SharePoint forms for most of these milestones because they contained the position ID number, which is a common field with unique identifiers. We manually tracked the timeliness of selected hiring process milestones.

In addition to an overall 'Time-to-Start Date', we also identified the following hiring process milestones:

- PRC Approval
- PRC Approval Date to the date the department initiates the hiring process
- The date the department initiates the hiring process to the date the department to makes a hiring decision
- The date the department makes a hiring decision to the new employee start date in PeopleSoft

Three of the dates we used are from HR's SharePoint forms that departments complete. The dates from these forms are autogenerated when they are submitted making them reliable measures of when HR is notified. We also used Employee Start Dates in PeopleSoft for current and terminated employees to calculate "Time-to-Start" and the date the department makes a hiring decision to the new employee start date. For more information about the milestones, we developed see Exhibit 5 on the following page.

HR's SharePoint forms (Job Opening Request Form, Existing List Request Form, and New Applicant Prescreening Request Form) are sufficiently reliable for the purpose of estimating the timeline of the hiring process milestones we identified. These forms mostly contain fill in the blank data fields, which leads to many errors. Foremost, the Job Opening Request Form and the Existing List Request Form allow for multiple position numbers to be filled out in the same submission. The audit team manually separated the forms with multiple entries to create individual records so we could track individual position numbers. In some cases, departments did not fill out valid position numbers.

We also observed inconsistencies with department ID, department name, and position title. If HR decides to use SharePoint forms to develop a database to track the timeliness of the hiring process, the forms need to be revised so HR can track the milestones accurately and efficiently.

How the City Auditor's Office Developed Hiring Milestones

Exhibit 6: City Auditor's Office Milestones and Definitions

Milestone	Definition of Measurement	Data Sources
Time-to-Start Date	The number of days between the department initiating the hiring process to the new employee start date in PeopleSoft.	Job Opening Request Forms, Existing List Request Forms in SharePoint and PeopleSoft Query
PRC Approval	The number of days PRC takes to approve a position.	PRC Data
Department submits a Job Opening Request Form to HR	The number of days it takes departments to initiate the hiring process with HR after the position is approved by PRC.	PRC Data and Job Opening Request Forms from SharePoint
Department submits a New Applicant Prescreening Request to HR	The number of days it takes departments to make a hiring decision after they initiate the hiring process with HR.	Job Opening Request Forms, Existing List Request Forms, and New Applicant Prescreening Request Forms in SharePoint
New Employee Start Date	The number of days it takes employees to start after the hiring decision is made and the background check is initiated.	New Applicant Prescreening Request Forms in SharePoint and PeopleSoft Query

Sources: Human Resources records, PeopleSoft HRIS, Society for Human Resource Management, and City Auditor's Office analysis.

We used the milestones and definitions from Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) to identify comparable process milestones.

Exhibit 7: SHRM Milestones and Definitions

Milestone	Definition of Measurement
Time-to-Fill	Time-To-Fill represents the number of days from the time the job requisition was opened to the time the applicant accepted the offer. This number is calculated using calendar days, including weekends and holidays.
Position Open to Position Approved-to-Fill	The number of days from the time the requisition was opened to the time the requisition was approved.
Position Approved-to-Fill to Job Posted	The number of days from the time the requisition was approved to the time the job was posted.
Job Posted to Screening Started	The number of days from the time the job was posted to the time the applicant screenings started.
Screen Applicants	The number of days it took to screen all job applicants.
Conduct Interviews	The number of days it took to conduct all interviews for all job applicants.
Make Final Decisions and Extend Offer	The number of days from the end of the interviews to when final decisions on job applicants were made and offers were extended.
Offer to Acceptance	The number of days from the time an employment offer was extended to job applicants to the time applicants accepted the offer.

Source: SHRM Benchmarking: Talent Access Report-Government Sector, 2020, pp.11, 23, 24.

Appendix C: Human Resources Department's Recent Changes to the Hiring Process

Human Resources management reports that they have incorporated a number of recent changes to the hiring process in an effort to improve timeliness. These changes include:

- HR eliminated the job posting request process in PeopleSoft and incorporated SharePoint forms for hiring departments to use. HR reports that this reduced the steps hiring departments had to follow from 112 to 8 or 9 steps. This change was implemented throughout May 2022 – August 2022.

- HR eliminated the requirement for departments to provide justification for every person on the eligibility list who did not get hired. Now, HR instead asks departments to provide justification for the applicant they hired.

- The hiring forms for new hires are now electronic in DocuSign. Previously, applicants had to physically sign these forms.

- HR took over coordinating background checks.

- HR implemented automatic screening to certify eligible applicants. Since the automatic list certification is new, HR requests that departments send the list of applicants that they select to interview back to HR so HR can verify that they are eligible. HR reports this will take no longer than 3 days. The automatic screening was implemented in July 2023. When HR was screening applicants, they estimated this process would take 7-12 days.

The PRC process is technically outside of HR's responsibility. Since PRC decisions impact the timeliness of the hiring process for many positions, we included it in our analysis.

- On August 16, 2023, the city manager announced that any request to fill a budgeted position was exempt from PRC consideration. This was announced after we analyzed PRC data and does not affect our analysis. Our PRC data ranges from May 2022 – June 2023.

Appendix D: Director of Human Resources' Response

Inter-Departmental Communication

Human Resources Department

RECEIVED

APR 12 2024

CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

Date: April 12, 2024

To: Douglas Jones, City Auditor

From: Teri Casey, Director of Human Resources

Subject: Response to Performance Audit: *Establish Goals and Develop Better Data to Improve Hiring Process Timeliness*

Since early 2022, the Talent Acquisition Division within the Human Resources Department has been making updates to its processes to increase efficiency in hiring.[1] When the City Auditor's team initially approached the Human Resources Department about this audit, we were excited because we were confident the audit team would identify best practices that HR could use to continue improvement of the hiring process. The Human Resources Department appreciates the dedicated work of the City Auditor's staff and we are grateful for their audit of hiring practices. During the period audited, the significant changes made by the Talent Acquisition team have lessened the time of HR's involvement in the overall hiring process. Our response to the six specific recommendations presented by the City Auditor follows.

1. *The director of human resources should establish individual Human Resources and hiring department milestones within the hiring process to track.*

Agree. The Human Resources Department has goals for its various parts of the hiring process, but those goals have been changing with the process changes made and are kept internally. HR believes it would be beneficial to departments to have an understanding of reasonable milestones for the interview and selection of candidates to join the City's workforce.

---

[1] Since the Department's Talent Acquisition Manager began in that role January 2022, the following changes have been made that have directly affected the efficiency of the hiring process:
1. HR assumed responsibility for the job creation process from managers. That process is now handled by our professional recruitment staff.
2. HR began utilizing functionality within PS for the application and certification lists. This has eliminated redundant paperwork burdens upon the hiring manager.
3. HR has worked with Local 500 to streamline electronic postings.
4. HR is working with IT to create a revolving advertising system to eliminate deadlines for submitting jobs to be posted and is anticipating implementation of that process by the end of this fiscal year.
5. HR revamped the non-residency waiver process, eliminating unnecessary involvement and reducing time while complying with the residency ordinance (Section 2-976, Kansas City Code of Ordinances).
6. HR hired a PeopleSoft consultant to configure application screening. That functionality went live July 17, 2023 and has reduced application review timelines from 7-14 business days to 2-3 business days.
7. HR streamlined its post-selection process for background checks and other paperwork, eliminating back and forth between applicant, hiring manager and human resources, and reducing this process time by approximately one week.

2. *The director of human resources should establish formal goals for timely completion of the entire hiring process as well as each milestone being tracked.*

Agree. HR believes goals would be beneficial and, although HR does not have any enforcement authority, the inclusion of milestones would allow HR to track those milestones and partner with departments to identify inefficiencies within the process and to offer solutions to make the hiring process more efficient.

3. *The director of human resources should identify data needed to track the hiring process, develop a database for tracking, and implement a method to ensure the data is collected accurately.*

Agree. The Manager of Talent Acquisition has met with the Peoplesoft consultant to identify opportunities for accurate and useful data collection related to the hiring process. The manager has also met with the General Services' IT division to discuss the creation of a web-based database that would export data from PeopleSoft for purposes of tracking the hiring process. HR's tracking plans include not only milestones but hiring data within departments to assist in identifying inefficiencies and developing possible solutions.

4. *The director of human resources should provide training, resources, and updates about the hiring process to supervisors and managers.*

Agree. As updates are made, the Managers of the Talent Acquisition and Compensation divisions have provided training to hiring managers. We are working with the Education and Development Division to create formal training that encompasses the entire hiring process. Additionally, HR recognizes that training is most effective when it includes paired resources that can be useful to supervisors and managers who may not perform duties regularly and is working on resources that supervisors/managers can refer to throughout the hiring process.

5. *The director of human resources should update the Human Resources Rules and Policy Manual to match current practices including the hiring process milestones and timeliness goals (explicitly or by reference).*

Agree. The final Human Resources Rules and Policy Manual draft has been sent to the City Manager's Office for review. The draft has been updated to reflect the current hiring processes. Milestones and goals will not explicitly be in the Human Resources Rules and Policy Manual; however, it will include references to AR 2-09 *Talent Acquisition, Recruitment & Selection Processes*, which we are also in the process of updating and will include those milestones.

6. *The director of human resources should implement a system to periodically communicate with departments and hiring supervisors/managers during the hiring process to provide additional guidance or assistance.*

Agree. Human Resources has recently implemented functionality in PeopleSoft that provides hiring supervisors reminders every 10 days when candidate lists have not been reviewed. We are also working on a monthly report that will be sent to directors and hiring supervisors regarding the length of time that a job requisition has been open. HR will seek additional communication options/dashboards in the selection of a new Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP). The manager of Talent Acquisition will be working on the implementation team for the next ERP system to ensure that the system and recruitment processes are closely aligned.

cc: Brian Platt, City Manager

2