

Human Resources Department

Background

The increasing complexity of government requires that a modern approach be adopted in the management of human resources. The county's recent decision to elevate the Human Resources Director to the level of Assistant County Executive Officer and rename the Personnel Department the Human Resources Department (HRD) are the first steps in the process of changing the personnel function to a more effective "corporate" type organization. These changes make the department more compatible with other similar personnel structures. The county recognizes that the 12,000 employees are its most valuable resource. It budgets more than \$527 million for salaries and benefits each fiscal year.

The three major divisions of HRD are: Risk Management, Employee Relations and Employee Benefits. The department currently is staffed with forty-two employees. Twenty-two are funded by and work physically in departments other than central personnel. This arrangement results in the HRD losing direct supervision of these employees, generates a lack of consistency in enforcement of personnel policy and causes overlapping of responsibilities.

The workload for HRD is heavy and continues to increase as the county prepares for anticipated growth. The HRD conducts over 400 recruitments, receives more than 40,000 applications for employment and certifies nearly 1,500 individuals for job consideration each year. In addition, HRD oversees a direct annual budget of \$55 million, and an indirect annual budget of \$59 million for a total of \$114 million.

Findings

1. The job classification or reclassification process is cumbersome and time consuming:
 - a. Some of the more than 1,600 county job classifications have not been reviewed in twenty years.
 - b. There are long delays in reclassification, in some cases, as much as eighteen months.
2. Some HRD personnel analysts are assigned to, and funded by, other county departments resulting in those departments receiving more responsive personnel service.
3. There is no county-wide educational reimbursement program that encourages employees to seek outside job-oriented training or assistance in obtaining college degrees.

4. The recruiting process can be slow and confusing for job applicants. Personnel recruitment averages seventy-two days from job vacancy until the position is filled.
5. County personnel records are not centrally stored. Each county department stores and maintains its own records.
6. The county alcohol and drug abuse program lacks effective implementation and offers no comprehensive effort to assist employees who need help.

Recommendations

The Human Resources Department:

1. Establish a classification system that is consistent throughout the county, monitored by central personnel for uniformity.
2. Clarify reporting responsibilities and reestablish control over all personnel analysts assigned to other departments and agencies.
3. Encourage employees to upgrade their skills with vocational or college-level courses. Tuition costs are to be reimbursed upon successful completion of approved courses.
4. Initiate a new computer system to automate the recruiting and hiring process so that central personnel can be more involved in the county-wide process.
5. Structure the computer system to incorporate centralized storage of all county departments' personnel records.
6. Concentrate on improving the existing alcohol and drug abuse program. Place particular emphasis on supervisor training, management monitoring, and offering aid to employees in need of assistance.