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# CIVILIAN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

## EE.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This SEAM Article establishes the policies and procedures that govern the employment practices related to civil recruitment and selection and serve to prevent any political influence in those processes at the Cook County Sheriff's Office. This Article reiterates these principles and updates the standing practices. In every circumstance involving the execution of this Article, any procedural step or requirement that is to be fulfilled by a specific employee of the Sheriff's Office may also be fulfilled by an authorized designee, even if not noted in this Article.

This Article does not apply to the recruitment and selection of direct appointment hires. For sworn hiring, refer to Seam Article A, Merit-Based Recruitment and Selection Process.

## EE.2 POLICY

The Department of Human Resources (HR) will guide the hiring process and assure that recruitment seeks qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force reflective of the population served by the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Selection and advancement will be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after a fair and open competition which assures that all qualified candidates receive equal opportunity for consideration.

The Sheriff's Office respects its relationship with its employees' legally recognized collective bargaining representatives and the provisions of applicable collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) it has negotiated with such representatives. Those relationships are governed by the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, 5 ILCS 315, et seq., as amended, and SEAM will be construed and administered consistent with that Act to the extent that the construction or administration does not conflict with the United States Constitution or federal civil rights laws. If the CBA does not contain specific procedure or is otherwise silent, the relevant procedure in the SEAM must be followed.

In the recruitment and selection process, and ultimate employment, the Sheriff's Office will ensure equal employment opportunity to all applicants without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, marital status, citizenship status, military status, disability, genetic history, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, political affiliation and/or influence, basing all recruitment and selection decisions solely on job-related criteria.

This Article supersedes all existing guidelines regarding civilian hiring, including the process outlined in SEAM Article A.

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**EE.3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

EE.3.1 GENERAL

- (a) Hiring managers, supervisors, and/or designated individuals are charged with making hiring decisions for their respective divisions and/or departments consistent with the policies and procedures set forth in this SEAM Article.
- (b) All employees and/or contractors involved in the hiring process are responsible for adhering to this Article and for signing a No Political Consideration Certification (NPCC).

EE.3.2 HR

HR staff has the responsibility of ensuring that all recruitment and selection practices are applied equitably and consistently by:

- (a) Creating job descriptions that accurately identify qualifications and essential job functions for all requested positions;
- (b) Securing approval through designated channels prior to posting any position;
- (c) Assuring that all recruitment materials, advertisements, media, notices, job postings, and communications to recruitment sources, applicants, hiring managers, and stakeholders are consistent with the hiring decisions set forth in the policies and procedures in this SEAM Article;
- (d) Providing training for Hiring Managers and individuals involved in interviewing and screening, monitoring compliance, and/or reporting non-compliance, in conjunction with the Compliance Officer;
- (e) Serving as the contact point for all applicants for employment;
- (f) Maintaining recruitment and selection data in order to conduct employment trend analysis; and
- (g) Providing data and analysis to executive leadership of the Sheriff's Office.

EE.3.3 COMPLIANCE OFFICER

The Compliance Officer is responsible for:

- (a) Monitoring the employment practices to ensure that all recruitment and selection are consistent with the policies and procedures set forth in this SEAM Article;
- (b) Identifying conflicts of interest and implementing remedies;
- (c) Conducting periodic and random audits;

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- (d) Making recommendations for quality and process improvements; and
- (e) Performing duties as outlined in SEAM Articles.

**EE.4 PROCEDURES**

**EE.4.1 CIVILIAN RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE**

- (a) Prior to posting for a position, the Executive Director of HR shall assess the hiring needs with the Hiring Manager. Such assessment may include but is not limited to:
  - 1. A job analysis for the position being sought and review of current positions to determine whether the position duties can or should be performed by existing staff;
  - 2. Review or create a job description that accurately details the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed, the essential job functions, responsibilities, the minimum and preferred qualifications, and appropriate compensation based on current employees in the same or similar titles/roles/positions;
  - 3. A determination of the appropriate salary range, consistent with the salary of others occupying the same or comparable positions; and
  - 4. The availability of open positions and/or funding in the budget to accommodate the hire.
- (b) The Hiring Manager will complete the Request to Hire Justification Form, or similar form, and ensure the appropriate Executive Office Chief signs and forwards the completed form to the Executive Director of HR.
- (c) The Executive Director of HR shall forward the justification form and job description (if available) to the Budget Office for approval. The Budget Office will obtain the required approval from the County and notify HR accordingly.
- (d) Pipeline Recruitment - The Executive Director of HR may authorize the posting of limited positions (e.g., difficult to fill, time-sensitive) in anticipation of available funding or vacancies in order to facilitate the seamless replacement of departing employees, create eligibility lists for key positions, or for other reasons deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Sheriff's Office.
- (e) The Executive Director of HR shall meet with the Hiring Manager to finalize:
  - 1. Minimum and preferred qualifications;
  - 2. Screening criteria, such as tests or qualifying questions appropriately related to the position; and
  - 3. Sourcing strategies including whether to post externally, recruitment sites to utilize, distribution to schools, professional organizations, social media sites, and other

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recruitment methods.

- (f) The Executive Director of HR shall create a Notice of Job Opportunity which will be approved electronically by the Hiring Manager before posting. The notice will be posted online and provide a link for applicants to access an application for employment. (e.g. Sheriff's Office public website for internal and external applicants, SheriffNet for internal applicants only). The posting should include the following:
1. Job title;
  2. Job description;
  3. Minimum qualifications and preferences, if any;
  4. Appropriate salary range;
  5. Required licenses and certifications;
  6. List of additional documents required by the applicant;
  7. Description of any tests that will be administered;
  8. Union name and bargaining unit, if applicable;
  9. Directions on how and where to apply;
  10. Time period during which applications will be accepted;
  11. Whether the posting is open to internal applicants only;
  12. Non-discrimination clause; and
  13. NPCC statement.
- (g) Applicants, unless requesting an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, are required to complete the application process through the Sheriff's Office online recruitment system.
1. Applicants must complete all screening questions, complete the application in its entirety, sign, certify, and include all requested documents in order to be considered for the posted position.
  2. All positions, both internal and external, will be posted for a period of at least two weeks.
- (h) In the event that the Hiring Manager and Executive Director of HR deem the applicant pool to be unsubstantial after the initial two-week posting period, the job posting, screening

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questions, or other aspects of the posting may be amended and reposted for an additional period of time. Any extended posting will not disqualify applicants who applied during the initial posting period.

**EE.4.2 PRE-INTERVIEW SCREENING**

(a) After the posting closes, the Executive Director of HR will screen all applications to determine which are qualified and create the Screening Spreadsheet/Eligibility List. The list will be based on the following criteria:

1. Whether the application was complete and submitted in a timely manner;
2. Whether the application indicates the applicant possesses all the minimum qualifications and number of preferred qualifications stated in the Notice of Job Opportunity;
3. Whether all requested documentation has been provided;
4. Whether the applicant is an internal candidate; and
5. Whether the applicant is in a union, if applicable.

(b) An internal applicant may be disqualified based on discipline if:

1. He/she has received discipline pursuant to an applicable collective bargaining agreement or otherwise resulting in suspensions of a total of three or more days for one or multiple infractions within the previous 24 months, including discipline resulting in a demotion or recommendation for demotion or termination;
2. He/she has received discipline pursuant to Sheriff's Office policies/procedures resulting in suspensions of a total of three or more days for one or multiple infractions within the previous 24 months, including discipline resulting in a demotion or recommendation for demotion or termination;
3. He/she has been found to be untruthful by OPR, a court of law, or an administrative body.

(c) An internal applicant will be disqualified based on attendance if within the prior 24 months he/she has incurred:

1. Unauthorized, unpaid, and/or home-check violations within the review period;
2. No sick time;
3. No vacation time;
4. No personal time;
5. No compensatory time;

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- 6. No holiday time; or
  - 7. Unauthorized FMLA.
- (d) Applicants will be screened in order to narrow the field when the response to the posting is substantial or to differentiate between applicants who are better suited for a position. The Executive Director of HR may, for those candidates who meet a pre-determined number of the preferred qualifications, conduct phone or electronic screening using an identical standard set of questions. Subsequent phone or electronic screening may occur if, after consulting with the Hiring Manager, additional identical clarifying questions are necessary to further determine the best suited candidates for in-person interviews.
- (e) A final interview list will be created by the Executive Director of HR and provided to the Hiring Manager for informational purposes. A notice will be sent, via electronic means (i.e., Taleo) to all applicants deemed not qualified for the position.

**EE.4.3 PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, SPECIALIZED POSITIONS:**

For positions that involve a high degree of technical expertise, professional degrees, specialized knowledge, education, or experience within a relevant field, or unique work/life experiences, the Compliance Officer, upon request, and after review of the job description and job posting, will designate the position as either professional, specialized, or technical, depending on the nature of the position, and add the position to the appropriate list if he/she concurs.

For purposes of this subsection, the Compliance Officer shall designate positions as follows:

- (a) Professional designation - for positions that require an advanced degree from a graduate or professional school and/or licensure from an authorized agency.
- (b) Specialized designation - for those positions requiring specialized knowledge within the relevant field (but not necessarily advanced degrees from graduate or professional schools), or specialized and unique work/life experience(s).
- (c) Technical designation - for positions that require experience and technical degree or training, such as with information technology (IT) and computer or software systems.
- (d) In addition to utilizing the criteria identified in the Civilian Recruitment Procedures section above, the Hiring Manager may view all resumes not disqualified through the Taleo screening function, subject to approval by the Compliance Officer.
- (e) The Hiring Manager will evaluate the applicants using criteria specific to the position and select at least three of the best suited candidates to interview, except if the number of applicants is less than ten, in which case only two need to be interviewed.
- (f) The final interview list, along with a memo describing the screening methods and the basis for selecting the final interview candidates will be provided to both the Executive Director of HR and the Compliance Officer.

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**EE.4.4 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POSITIONS**

- (a) Due to the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining high level IT-skilled talent, candidates may be exempt from the formal posting, screening, and panel interview process at the Sheriff's Office.
- (b) HR may utilize the following procedures to fill IT technical vacancies:
  - 1. In conjunction with Chief Information Officer, the Talent Acquisition Manager will have the ability to use private sector best practices to screen, interview, and extend conditional offers of employment to candidates at job fairs, career fairs, and outside sourcing channels.
  - 2. Documentation of the hiring process shall be maintained in HR.
  - 3. Political reasons or factors cannot be considered when selecting IT talent.
  - 4. All individuals involved in this hiring process, including the selected candidate, shall sign a NPCC.
  - 5. All candidates selected through this hiring process may be provided a confidential link to the Sheriff's Office application portal.
  - 6. The respective department head must submit a completed Request to Hire Justification Form to the Executive Director of HR.

**EE.4.5 IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS**

The Executive Director of HR is the main point of contact for all applicants and will communicate all information to the applicant regarding the interview, additional requirements, and next steps.

- (a) For positions not designated as professional, technical, or specialized, the Executive Director of HR will coordinate in-person interviews for a minimum of five applicants starting with the best suited candidates. If the number of best suited candidates or applicants is less than twenty, only a minimum of two need to be interviewed.
- (b) The Executive Director of HR in conjunction with the Hiring Manager shall complete a list of at least 10 interview questions that will establish the following:
  - 1. The applicant's suitability for the position;
  - 2. Willingness and ability to do the job;
  - 3. Availability for work hours and willingness to work at the job location;
  - 4. Prior job expertise, experience, and performance;
  - 5. Knowledge and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the position;  
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6. The extent to which the applicant matches the relevant qualifications for the position.
- (c) Interviews will be conducted in accordance with the Oral Interview Panels Procedures
1. The respective department head shall select two employees from the hiring department who are familiar with the minimum job duties and minimum qualifications, both of whom are in a supervisory position.
  2. The Executive Director of HR shall also participate as one of the three panel members.
  3. Panel members shall have completed Unlawful Political Discrimination interview training prior to participating in any Sheriff's Office interview of prospective applicants.
  4. When the applicant interviews are held on different days the same employees will interview all applicants for the position, when possible.
- (d) At the completion of the interviews, all panelists who participated in the process may hold a selection meeting.
1. Candidates will be ranked either "highly recommended", "recommended" or "not recommended".
  2. Any applicant that receives at least one "not recommended" will be excluded from consideration.
  3. The panelists may discuss the qualifications of the applicants and reach consensus on ranking as first choice, second choice, third choice and so on.
- (e) The HR representative from the interview panel shall write a brief memo summarizing the reasons for selecting the applicant and submit it to the Compliance Officer.
1. The Compliance Officer will review the justification and assess whether the reasons for hire establish that the candidate is the best suited.
  2. The Compliance Officer may convene a consensus meeting with panel members to further assess the recommendation to hire.
  3. If the Compliance Officer is satisfied that the reasons for hire are non-political and the best suited candidate is recommended, the panel recommendation to hire will be affirmed.
  4. If the Compliance Officer is not satisfied with the reasons presented, the applicant(s) with the highest overall score will be selected to hire.

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- (f) The Executive Director of HR shall make a conditional offer of employment pending the successful completion of required background checks, medical screening, and a pre-employment drug test.
  - 1. If the applicant is not cleared for employment or if the applicant declines the position, an offer is made to the second applicant.
  - 2. If the second applicant is not cleared for employment or if the applicant declines the position, the respective department head may choose to move to the next applicant or to begin the hiring process again.
  
- (g) Once the applicant has accepted the position and cleared all pre-employment tests and background checks, the Executive Director of HR shall send a notice of position filled to all qualified applicants.

**EE.5 EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT HIRING PROCESS**

- (a) The hiring process for executive assistants, who are assigned to a department head/division/unit head, may not require posting of job vacancies or conducting interviews.

The respective department head must submit a Request to Hire Justification Form to the Executive Director of HR and the Compliance Officer.

- 1. All individuals involved in the executive assistant hiring process, including the selected candidate, shall sign a NPCC.
  - 2. The Compliance Officer should, within 72 hours of receipt of the selection, approve or deny the selection and will provide written notification to the Executive Director of HR.
  - 3. For denials, the Compliance Officer shall provide a written justification.
  - 4. The Compliance Officer shall certify the approval or denial with the NPCC.
  
- (b) An executive assistant hired or transferred pursuant to the process described in this section may be terminated at the discretion of the respective department head or an individual holding an exempt position.

**EE.6 OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACTING THE HIRING PROCESS**

Other limited circumstances impacting the applicability of the procedures outlined in this Article for hiring may include:

- 1. Settlements and awards required for compliance with any judgment, negotiated settlement, and complaint or arbitration award.
- 2. Employment actions required by collective bargaining agreements including

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layoffs, recall, reemployment, promotion.

3. The use of new processes, systems, and/or technologies that more efficiently recruit, screen, and interview job candidates, but only if these procedures and/or technologies are transparent, adequately prevent political influence in the hiring process, and are presented to and approved by the Compliance Officer.
4. The use of the direct appointment process for exempt employees and executive assistants.

**EE.7 RECRUITING CONSULTANT PROCEDURES**

Recruiting consultants may be retained for the purpose of recruiting professional, technical, and specialized positions on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

- (a) All contracts for recruitment consultants will contain a provision that prohibits participation in unlawful political discrimination and requires the reporting of political contacts.
- (b) All potential applicants identified by the recruiting consultant will be required to complete all applications, background checks, testing, and validation required confirming they meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

**EE.8 PROHIBITED PRACTICES**

No employee of the Sheriff's Office may engage in prohibited personnel practices in the selection and hiring process outlined above and as referenced in Prohibited Hiring Practices Appendix.