



Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Response to the

2019 - 2020 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury

Topic: “Human Resources – Building and Maintaining a Productive Workforce, the Lifeblood of an Organization”

2019 - 2020 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report –

Topic: “Human Resources – Building and Maintaining a Productive Workforce, the Lifeblood of an Organization”

Irma Ramirez-Bough, Director of Human Resources

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Topic: “Human Resources – Building and Maintaining a Productive Workforce, the Lifeblood of an Organization”

Irma Ramirez-Bough, Director of Human Resources

REPORT TITLE: 2019 - 2020 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report –
Topic: “Human Resources – Building and Maintaining a Productive Workforce, the Lifeblood of an Organization”

RESPONSE BY: Monterey County Board of Supervisors

RESPONSE TO: Findings F1, F2, F3, F4, F5 and F6

FINDINGS

- F1. As evidenced by interviews, the current level of vacant health care positions has a direct and negative impact on the County by reducing the County’s ability to deliver community disease control and prevention outreach, and to provide adequate Public Health case management activities. This also creates an undue burden on the remaining staff that leads to job burnout.

Response F1:

Agree

The Health Department submits that the current vacancy rate creates an undue burden on County staff and negatively impacts service delivery levels.

- F2. Critical positions such as public health nurse practitioners, psychiatric social workers, environmental health specialists, and physicians are not being filled in a timely manner.

Response F2:

Partially Agree

The Health Department submits that many of these critical positions are a Continuous Recruitment or Open Until Filled. These positions are difficult to fill due to low number of qualified candidates living or willing to relocate to Monterey County due to cost of living.

- F3. Human Resources staffing levels in some Departments are insufficient to maintain optimum staffing levels.

Response F3:

Partially Agree

The Human Resources Department submits that there are insufficient HR staffing levels in some departments. In other departments, HR staffing levels are appropriate.

- F4. Current County personnel vacancy levels and rates of hire confirm that recruitment has not been occurring at an optimal level in either the centralized or the decentralized departments.

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Response F4:

Agree

The Human Resources Department has conducted an in-depth analysis of recruitment process and identified the inefficiencies. In collaboration with the Information Technology Department, we have created a Recruitment Tracking System (RTS). The RTS is intended to create standardization in the recruitment process, define roles and responsibilities (between the HR Analyst and department management), establish timelines, and provide transparency for services rendered with an overall goal of expediting the recruitment process

- F5. The compensation plan (currently called “Compensation Philosophy”) in use by Monterey County is outdated; the list of public agencies used for “market survey” comparison was last updated in 1989, more than 30 years ago.

Response F5:

Agree

The Human Resources Department submits that the County’s Compensation Philosophy has been in place since 1989. Recently research analysis undertaken by the Human Resources Department indicates that this potentially impacts the County’s ability to recruit and retain qualified and experienced employees in certain classifications.

- F6. As discussed in interviews, on-line learning systems may provide critical on demand training, but they cannot replace the human interaction that occurs in person-to-person training, which supports job satisfaction.

Response F6:

Agree

The recent Countywide Employee Engagement Survey indicated that employees express an interest that supports the need for classroom training.

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RESPONSE BY: Monterey County Board of Supervisors

RESPONSE TO: Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7 and R8

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The “Compensation Philosophy” should be updated to reflect appropriate and comparable counties and cities for each job classification. This update should be completed in six months.

When the 2019/20 Civil Grand Jury began our investigations, COVID-19 had not yet become a public health crisis. However, as we conclude our reports, we are tasked to specify a time frame within which to address our recommendations. We have done so, attempting to allow some extra time given the current situation. We ask the County Supervisors, Departments, Cities, and Special Districts responsible for enacting our recommendations to do their best to accomplish these goals as expeditiously as possible, given the effect of the current pandemic crisis on staffing availability.

Response R1:

Agree

The Human Resources Department has completed a comprehensive data analysis to identify comparable agencies. The Human Resources has submitted their recommendation to the County Administrative Office for consideration and to discuss next steps. The completion date is contingent upon the meet and confer process with the represented employee groups and Board of Supervisors direction with an overall target implementation date of November 2020.

- R2. County Human Resources should engage an experienced compensation consultant to assist in the creation of a transparent and global compensation and classification program. This should be completed in three months.

Response R2:

Disagree

The Human Resources Department submits that the Director of Human Resources and assigned staff are the premier subject matter experts in this area. The hiring of a consultant, with the appropriate public sector experience, requires significant financial resources which would be better utilized in creating additional County staffing resources. Considerable staff time must be devoted at the outset to educating the consultant and staff about the details of County operations, HR policies and practices, and classification and compensation systems. Additionally, our experience with hiring consultants requires

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County staff to review and validate the work product. This additional work adds significant time for completion of the studies and diverts County staff from their daily responsibilities.

Providing additional resources to the Human Resources Department would allow County staff to conduct a comprehensive classification and compensation review with the ability to sustain the program moving forward.

- R3. Budgeted positions should be posted in a timely manner giving priority to posting positions that affect the health and safety of County residents. This posting should occur within 60 days.

Response R3:
Partially Agree

The Human Resources and Health Departments agree this is a good goal, but without appropriate HR staffing resources, 60 day postings may not always be achievable.

- R4. Open positions should be proactively advertised within 30 days of an employment vacancy or upon notice of retirement, transfer, or resignation to avoid reduction of essential public services, departmental job burnout, and overtime or temporary hiring expense.

Response R4:
Partially Agree

The Human Resources Department submits that individual departments may have various reasons for not filling a vacancy immediately which may impact the length of time between a notice of separation and the opening of a recruitment. The Human Resources Department collaborates with the hiring authorities in departments to open recruitments as quickly as possible. Upon receipt of the request to fill the position, the Human Resources Department generally opens the recruitment within 30 days.

- R5. Each budget cycle should include specific opportunities for department heads to identify and justify specific referral and hiring bonuses for their hard-to-fill positions. This process should begin within six months of the date of this report.

Response R5:
Disagree

The Human Resources Department submits that individual departments have the ability to budget for these types of incentives during each budget cycle.

- R6. In order to ensure an adequate staffing level for essential County public health workers, the County should begin a process to identify supplemental funding sources to mitigate un-forecast budget shortfalls in federal and state grants, aid, or other direct program funding. This analysis should be completed in 30 days.

Response R6:

Partially Agree

The Health Department submits that it continuously researches and pursues additional funding opportunities for the County to support core health functions.

- R7. The Learning and Organizational Development Division of the Human Resource Department should be restored to include classroom training. This should be completed within 18 months.

Response R7:

Agree

The Human Resources Department submits that further analysis is needed to identify the costs associated to reinstate staff in alignment with the current and future organizational development needs. The Board of Supervisors Budget Committee and Board of Supervisors would be required to approve a budget augmentation to restore this Learning and Organizational Development Division.

- R8. The County should conduct a review to determine the level of Human Resources staffing, both in the departments and in the Human Resources Department, that can provide support levels sufficient to achieve the 10% vacancy rate goal as assumed with the County budget. This review is to be completed within 15 months.

Response R8:

Agree

The Human Resources Department submits that a review of Human Resources staffing should be conducted to determine the level of staffing needed to achieve departmental vacancy rate goals which are based on individual department operational needs. Further analysis is required to identify individual department vacancy goals.