



POLICY TITLE: **Hiring Process**

POLICY NO.: **PR-24**

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to provide written guidelines governing the employment of individuals within Washington County.

II. GENERAL POLICY

Washington County's basic hiring policy strives to ensure that every reasonable effort is made to recruit, screen, and select job applicants based on predetermined qualifications that do not discriminate against any qualified person. Washington County's intention under this Policy is to hire and promote individuals based on merit, meaning those who demonstrate the greatest and most desirable level of knowledge, skills, abilities, fitness, or other appropriate qualifications.

III. RECRUITING PROCEDURE

- A.** When a vacancy exists, whether due to resignation, promotion or a new position, the employing department head or division director (or designated representative) will submit the request to advertise and fill the position using Form 100. The form outlines required details such as the department's name, job title, salary grade and step, strategy for advertisement and any related recruitment details. The form should be signed by the department head and/or division director and submitted to the Department of Human Resources. When Form 100 is ready for review, HR will circulate it for the required approvals. If the position has already been approved and budgeted for the current fiscal year, the County Administrator and the Director of Human Resources have the authority to review and approve the requisition. If the requisition represents a new position, the position will need to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners before any recruiting activity can begin.
- B.** Job posting ensures that all employees are made aware of and have the opportunity to apply for open positions. While it is the County's philosophy to promote from within whenever possible, our preference is to run parallel processes for internal and external postings in an effort to expedite the overall recruiting cycle. Exceptions for internal-only postings can be requested when the hiring manager believes the internal pipeline of talent is so strong, that internal posting would be sufficient.
- C.** The following procedure will be followed for all job postings:
1. Method of Posting - Job postings will be distributed via county e-mail. Department heads and division directors will be required to distribute postings or display them on departmental bulletin boards

for any employees who do not have access to e-mail.

2. Posting Duration -Departments may request the desired posting (Internal Only or Both Internal and External or Open Until Filled) on the Form 100. Internal only positing will be posted for five (5) business days. External postings are posted for fourteen (14) calendar days unless the employing department request the posting Open Until Filled, during which time applications may be submitted to the Department of Human Resources.
3. Posting Information - Each job posting requires the following information:
 - a) Job title.
 - b) Department.
 - c) Grade, step, and salary range (if appropriate).
 - d) Current job description which includes a summary of job requirements, job responsibilities, principal duties and minimum qualifications for the candidates; and
 - e) Closing Date (deadline)
4. Application Procedure - Employees who wish to apply for a posted position must complete the following two steps:
 - a. Complete an Internal Job Application Form, which is available from Human Resources, or online at the County's website at www.washco-md.net/internal-jobs/;
 - b. Submit the completed Internal Job Application Form, along with a current resume, to the Department of Human Resources by the closing date specified on the job posting.

Notice: Accuracy (or inaccuracy) in both your resume and application are considerable factors in the evaluation process.

IV. GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

- A. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for developing the most suitable methods for recruiting, screening, and hiring programs and procedures to ensure that this Policy is carried out in the most efficient, timely, and lawful manner.
- B. The Department of Human Resources is responsible for the placement of recruitment notices and receipt of all employment applications. When a recruitment notice is placed, the Department of Human Resources will document the necessary recruitment tracking records before forwarding applications to the employing department head or division director.

- C. The employing department head or division director will ensure that all applications are reviewed and listed on the Form 400 with relevant feedback. The employing department head or division director will return the Form 400 to the Department of Human Resources for review. After ensuring that all persons selected for interview meet the qualifications for the vacant position, the Department of Human Resources Recruiter will work with the employing department head or division director to establish an interview strategy (panel, interview questions, schedule, etc.). WCC grades 13 and above and DES Grades 6 and above are required to have a representative from the Department of Human Resources on the interview panel
- D. The employing department head or division director (or designated representative) will conduct all employment interviews in a legally acceptable format. Upon completion of interviews, the employing department head or division director will ensure that job-related reference checks are conducted on the top candidates for the vacant position. The employing department head or division director should use Form 602 to complete (3) employment related reference checks for external candidates. Once a candidate has been selected for recommendation, the employing department head or division director will forward a completed 700 form signed by the department head or division director, 601Form. 602 Form along with all supporting documentation, to the Department of Human Resources for review. The 700 form should include the recommended Grade and Step from the corresponding salary scale, based on the candidates experience and qualifications. To the extent possible, three names will be submitted in priority of qualification to the Department of Human Resources.
- E. The Director of Human Resources will ensure that all applicable policies were followed during the interviewing process and that the recommended applicant meets the qualifications of the vacant position. Once the Director of Human Resources is confident that every reasonable effort has been made to hire the most qualified person for the vacant position, then he or she will endorse the recommendation and verify wage information.
- F. The Director of Human Resources has the authority to approve the recommendations to advertise/hire/overlap/promote for all positions that are part-time, seasonal, or temporary positions (PTT/ PTR).

The County Administrator has the authority to approve the recommendations to advertise/hire/overlap/promote for all regular, full-time positions on the WCC Scale Grades 1-12 or Grades 1-5 on the DES Scale at the recommended step based on the candidates experience and qualifications. The County Administrator can authorize the advertisement to backfill/overlap any open position, provided the position was already budgeted.

- G. The Board of County Commissioners will be consulted if the employing department head or division director is requesting:
- To create a new position (one not approved during the annual budget review process),
 - A wage higher than the minimum of the advertised range established by

- the appropriate salary grade and steps,
- An offer for a regular, full-time position Grades 13 and above (WCC Scale) and Grades 6 and above (DES Scale).

V. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

A. Historical and Legal Precedence

In 1986 the Maryland State Legislature enacted a law that requires criminal background checks of all persons hired after October 1, 1986, who supervise youth or who, by the nature of their jobs, are afforded the opportunity of direct, frequent contact with youths. Washington County instituted a standard procedure with regard to all full and part-time employees hired after October 1, 1986. The jobs most directly affected by these procedures are managed in the Washington County Parks and Recreation Department. Section VI of this Policy outlines procedures to ensure that the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County complies with Title 5, Subtitle 5, Section 5-551, of the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, which requires criminal background checks to be conducted on all employees of a recreation center or recreation program operated by State or local governments primarily serving minors.

B. Employees

1. All employees working with youth, as governed by the laws of the State of Maryland, must undergo criminal background checks (State and FBI) upon hire.
2. The fingerprinting required for criminal background checks will be conducted by an agency designated at the sole discretion of the County. The background investigation is the last step in the employment process and will only occur after the appropriate approvals for employment have been made pursuant to Section III of this Policy. Newly hired employees who are requested to report to work prior to the receipt of background check results do so with the understanding that, if an unfavorable report is received, this will be treated as a violation of established County policy and immediate termination will result. The County is responsible for all fees associated with conducting criminal background checks.

3. Independent Contractors

All independent contractors hired by the County to work with youth or to have frequent access to youth are required to undergo criminal background checks as part of a contract award. The costs associated with the criminal background checks are the sole responsibility of and must be paid by the independent contractor.

4. Volunteers

The Board of County Commissioners, in keeping with the letter of the law, requires all unpaid volunteers to undergo criminal background investigations at County expense if their volunteer work includes

involvement in programs that put them in direct, frequent contact with youth.

5. Confidentiality

All results of background investigations will be kept in strictest confidence.

VI. PRE-EMPLOYMENT EXAMINATIONS

A. Pre-Employment Physical Examination

Before any applicant or prospective employee is finally accepted for employment with Washington County, he or she must undergo a pre-employment physical examination, including a drug screening, to determine physical capability of handling job duties and to identify any pre-existing condition that might jeopardize the health or safety of the prospective employee, other employees, or the public. Pre-employment physical examinations will be conducted by a physician selected by the County Commissioners, and any expenses incurred will be paid by Washington County. If an applicant or prospective employee is found to have a physical restriction or disability that was incurred prior to applying for employment with Washington County, the County-designated examining physician will determine whether the applicant or prospective employee can perform the essential functions of the job for which they're being considered. This condition is imposed to protect Washington County, the public, and to prevent denial of employment due to disability.²

B. Return-to-Work Physical Examination

If an employee has been absent from his or her position for a prolonged length of time, whether due to a work-related or non-work-related injury or illness, he or she may be asked to undergo a return-to-work physical examination to determine physical capability to return to work and resume normal job duties. Return-to-work physical examinations will be conducted by a physician selected by the County Commissioners, and any expenses incurred will be paid by Washington County. Failure to comply with the requested examination may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

C. Conditions of Employment

All applicants, prospective employees, and employees are required to comply with the recommendations of the County-designated examining physician, including any determination made pursuant to Section VI of this Policy regarding conditions, if any, of employment or continued employment. If a question arises as to whether the County should employ or should continue to employ a person who does not pass the physical examination, the decision of the Board of County Commissioners or designated representative will be final.

VII. EMPLOYEE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT**A. Residency Requirement for Specified Positions**

The County Administrator and the Director of Emergency Management must reside in Washington County.

B. Exception to Residency Requirement for Specified Positions

Other than the specific exceptions listed in VII.A all department heads and division directors residing outside of the County prior to the adoption of this Policy will be allowed to maintain their out-of- County residence and will not be required to relocate.

VIII. EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES**A. Background and Rationale**

Washington County's employment policy fosters the hiring, promotion, and transfer of employees on the basis of individual merit and seeks to avoid any appearance of favoritism or discrimination in making employment decisions. Certain positions within County government represent a sphere of influence with regard to employment- and compensation-related decisions that have the potential to appear fraught with favoritism or discrimination when such decisions involve direct relatives who are employed by Washington County. Also, the employment of direct relatives within any one department or division in County government may produce discomfort and dysfunction in working relationships. The employment of direct relatives at certain levels of County government that result in supervisor-subordinate relationships between direct relatives, or the employment of direct relatives in positions where a relative might have influence over another relative's status or job security, is regarded as a potential violation of Washington County's employment policy. Family members may be employed by the County. However, under no circumstance should one employee be directly supervised by another employee who is a direct family member.

B. Definition of Direct Relatives

For purposes of Section VIII of this Policy, a direct relative is defined as any of the following relationships to an employee: Siblings, Spouses, Parents, or Children.

C. Prohibited Employment Relationships

Supervisors, department heads, and division directors are prohibited from attempting to influence the hiring of or recommending the employment of direct relatives as defined in Section VIII.B. Supervisors, department heads, and division directors are also prohibited from remaining in employment

relationships with direct relatives as their direct subordinates. When employment circumstances arise which are contrary to Section VIII of this Policy, whether by promotion, transfer, marriage, or some other means, the affected employees will have six (6) months in which to voluntarily resolve the prohibited employment circumstances; that is, one or more of the affected employees may request a transfer to a different department or division or may voluntarily terminate employment. If the affected employees are unable to resolve the prohibited employment circumstances on their own, their immediate supervisor(s), the Director of Human Resources, and the County Administrator will review the case and make a recommendation to the County Commissioners. The County Commissioners will make the final decisions concerning any interpretation of, exception to, or resolution for this policy, and the Board's decision will be binding.³

IX. TEMPORARY UPGRADES

The Director of Human Resources has authority to approve temporary upgrade requests that conform to County policy.¹ Requests that deviate from County policy will be discussed with the County Administrator, and decisions will be made under those circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

X. DISCHARGE

The Director of Human Resources has the authority to discharge any part-time, temporary, or seasonal employee. The Board of County Commissioners have the sole authority to discharge any regular, full-time County employee

¹ See Policy No. PR-10 Guidelines for the Temporary Upgrade of Employees.

² See Policy No. PR-31 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA).

³ See Policy No. PR-13 Anti-Harassment and Complaint Procedure for County policy and procedure relating to dating and consensual romantic and sexual relationships.

Policy Actions

Action Taken	Approval Date	Effective Date
Adoption	January 5, 1999	January 5, 1999
Revision	October 26, 1999	October 26, 1999
Revision – consolidated PR-1 Criminal Background Checks, PR-4 Physical Examinations, PR- 7 Employment of Family Members, PR-14 Employee Residency Requirement, PR-24 Hiring Practices, and PR-28 Job Posting Policy and Procedures.	November 28, 2017	November 28, 2017
Revision – Updated recruiting procedure, background checks, residency requirements, employment of relatives, and responsibilities for employment process.	October 22, 2024	October 22, 2024