DATE: October 30, 2010

TO: The Snohomish County Council

FROM: Kymber Waltmunson

TOPIC: Follow Up of the Hiring Practices Audit

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding the current status of Snohomish County Human Resources in implementing audit recommendations made in the performance audit of hiring practices completed in August 2007.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with Snohomish County on this project.

Summary of Findings

Because of a challenging budget environment, Snohomish County has been reducing its workforce since the publication of this audit in 2007. During 2008-2010 the county had very little need or opportunity to recruit and select applicants for county employment. Rather, Human Resources has been managing a deep layoff register to fill open positions. The result of this focus is that the recommendations made in 2007 have not been fully implemented. Human Resources has, however, made significant progress strengthening the controls over recruitment and selection. This will leverage implementation of the six recommendations as county recruitment and selection increase in the coming years.

#	Recommendation	Status	Notes
1	HR Role/Resources	**OPEN**	Not a HR priority at this time
2	Hiring Controls	**OPEN**	
	• Risk Mitigation	initiated	Additional efforts are planned for risk mitigation
	• Procedures	closed	
	• Affirmative Action	closed	
	• Recruitment Plan	open	Impacted by lack of hiring
	• Job Requisition	closed	
	• Process Checklist	closed	
	• Training	initiated	2011 full implementation target
	• File Audits	open	Impacted by lack of hiring
	• Data Plan	open	2011 implementation target
	• Hiring Forum	closed	
3	Recruiting Plans	**OPEN**	Impacted by lack of hiring
4	Exit Interviews	**OPEN**	
5	Time to Fill	**OPEN**	Impacted by lack of hiring
6	Eligibility Registers	**OPEN**	Impacted by lack of hiring

Role of Human Resources

> **Recommendation 1:**
> Snohomish County Code 3A should be revised to make HR responsible for countywide planning, coordination, and general tracking of the recruitment and selection processes. HR should determine and request any resources needed to fulfill an expanded role in the recruitment and selection process.

Implementation of this recommendation has not been a priority for Human Resources during 2008-2010.

Next Steps
In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should re-evaluate their roles and resources when the county workforce is focused less on reductions and more on recruitment and retention.

Human Resources Controls

> **Recommendation 2:**
> HR should plan, institute, and monitor a comprehensive set of controls including:
> - risk mitigation strategies;
> - policies and procedures;
> - Affirmative Action Plan;
> - Recruitment Plan;
> - effective and efficient job requisition process and form;
> - a countywide recruitment and selection process checklist;
> - basic and ongoing training for R/S staff;
> - closed job file audits;
> - data collection, analysis, and response plan; and
> - establish a countywide information sharing forum for R/S staff.

Human Resources has made significant progress in implementing processes to help ensure that hiring is completed efficiently, effectively, and consistently but full implementation of this recommendation has been impacted by a shifting environment and priorities.

Risk Mitigation
Risk is reduced through implementation of each recommendation made in this audit; however the original audit suggested several best practices to reduce recruitment and selection risk. The most important of these was that Human Resources should ensure a consistent, fair, defensible, and documented recruitment and hiring process.

Designing and implementing a SharePoint site as a central location for hiring resources helps to facilitate a consistent, fair, defensible, and documented process. This site is utilized by recruitment and selection staff across the county and both provides up-to-date information and standardizes processes.

Human Resources is also currently investigating the purchase of an automated recruitment system. They plan to link this system with current county data systems to leverage its impact. If implemented, an automated recruitment system will reduce risk by standardizing processes and enhancing documentation.

Although the SharePoint and plans for an automated recruitment system are a strong start, more can be done to reduce recruitment and selection risk.

Procedures
The data available on the SharePoint site has provided systematic and well-communicated guidance to individuals across the county who recruit and select employees. The information contained in the SharePoint site meets the objective of this element of Recommendation 2.

Affirmative Action
The Affirmative Action Plan has been developed by Human Resources and adopted for the years 2010 - 2011. This meets the goals for this element of Recommendation 2.

Recruitment Plan
Human Resources has not yet developed a recruitment plan and program with the components required in Snohomish County Code Chapter 3A should be put in place and communicated to employees. Human Resources reports that they intend to begin work on this plan/program in 2011.

Job Requisition
The job requisition form has been updated and instructions are available for department/office recruitment and selection staff on the SharePoint site. These actions meet the intention of this element of Recommendation 2.

Process Checklist
The SharePoint site provides full guidance for the recruitment and selection process. This meets the objective of this element of Recommendation 2.

Training
Human Resources has provided several training opportunities for recruitment and selection staff across the county. Additional training is planned and Human Resources plans to initiate a process for ensuring sufficient training and maintaining training records in 2011.

File Audits
Since the audit, Human Resources has audited files only in response to issues raised by applicants and/or labor unions. They report that they do not currently have the resources to audit each file. If an automated recruitment system is put in place, this will facilitate future file audits. Problems could be identified and documentation improved using a file audit process.

Data Plan

Human Resources has not yet developed a data collection, analysis, and response plan. Best practices state that data collected and monitored should include at a minimum:

- Length of time each recruitment and selection takes
- Recruitment sourcing and effectiveness
- Impact of diversity initiatives
- Unintended impacts on protected classes in testing
- Quality of new hires

Data should be collected in order to better understand, communicate, and inform the county's hiring practices. Human Resources states that they will take action on this element of Recommendation 2 in 2011.

Hiring Forum

Human Resources has facilitated several meetings of a forum to facilitate information sharing for recruitment and selection staff across the county. They plan to continue assist this group. Human Resources has met the intent of this element of Recommendation 2.

Next Steps

In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should:

1. Formally assess risk and take actions that grow out of the risk assessment process.
2. Develop a Recruitment Plan.
3. Implement and monitor a training plan for recruitment and selection staff in departments and offices.
4. Increase auditing of recruitment and selection files completed by staff in departments and offices.
5. Develop a formal data collection, analysis, and response plan.

Recruiting Plans

Recommendation 3:
With the assistance of HR, departments and offices should develop short- and long-term recruiting plans for particularly difficult-to-fill positions.

In the original audit, most departments and offices noted difficulty finding qualified candidates for specific technical positions, skilled and experienced managers, diverse candidates, and project/temporary positions. Human Resources has provided some informal assistance to departments and offices with difficult-to-fill positions during the follow up period. Human Resources plans to further assist departments and offices as recruitment needs increase.

Next Steps

In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should work with departments and offices with difficult-to-fill positions to develop short- and long-term recruiting plans.

Exit Interviews

> Recommendation 4:
> HR should develop an exit interview program to determine the reasons for increasing first year turnover rates and identify strategies to decrease early separations.

The 2007 audit showed that the number of candidates who left Snohomish County within the first year of employment had doubled between 2001-2005 to almost 25%. It is unclear if this turnover is still a concern in 2010. Exit interviews are often used by organizations to better understand their turnover rates as they can assist an organization in identifying areas where improvements could be made in the working environment, culture, management/leadership and training.

Human Resources has recommended that exit interviews not be documented. Exit interviews are subject to public disclosure. Human Resources reports that there has been an increase in the number of informal exit interviews that are occurring at the department and office level.

Next Steps
In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should formally support an exit interview process.

Time to Fill

> Recommendation 5:
> HR, in consultation with departments and offices, should determine if the county's time to fill positions is acceptable and make policy changes accordingly.

The audit showed that the Snohomish County recruitment and selection process took longer than comparable organizations and was growing. There were several internal process points where efficiencies could improve the time to fill open positions. When positions are open for longer periods of time quality candidates can be lost and organizational productivity can suffer. Because of the focus on reduction of force, there have been too few full recruitment processes to calculate this measure. Utilizing the layoff register has reduced time to fill, but this does not reflect the full recruitment process.

Next Steps
In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should begin to assess time-to-fill when there are a sufficient number of full recruitment processes occurring in the county to warrant this calculation.

Eligibility Registers

> Recommendation 6:
> HR should explore developing and maintaining eligibility registers for the use of all departments and assist departments in identifying job classifications for which department/office-managed eligibility registers could improve efficiency.

Human Resources has reviewed and approved the methodology for creating an eligibility register for firefighters at Paine Field. They have not yet developed an eligibility register for other roles. This is likely not needed until the layoff register stops being the primary source for filling open positions.

Next Steps
In order to fully meet the intent of this recommendation, Human Resources should formally explore development of eligibility registers when there are a sufficient number of full recruitment processes occurring in the county to warrant this calculation.