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## **Adams County Merit Hire Procedures**

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## **Adams County Employment Policy**

### **Policy Statement:**

It is the policy of the County of Adams to recruit and select the most qualified candidates for vacant positions and to do so in a manner that provides equal employment opportunity, ensures open competition, and prohibits discrimination.

### **Purpose Statement:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide supervisors with the tools necessary to recruit, select, hire, and then manage qualified candidates for vacant positions.

### **Scope Statement:**

This policy applies to all County employees and County-affiliated employees responsible for the employment process for prospective County of Adams' employees. The County does not prohibit collective organization or collective bargaining and there is no provision against collective bargaining. Certain County employees are subject to the provisions of prevailing collective bargaining agreements. Provisions of such collective bargaining agreements shall be followed if there is a conflict between this policy and such provisions. The County reviews current collective bargaining agreements to ensure merit principles will not be infringed upon.

### **Actions/Procedures**

#### **Prior to Recruitment:**

A. The following steps are required before recruiting for a **new** position:

1. The supervisor is required to create a job description for the new position in collaboration with the Human Resources Department.
2. After the supervisor completes the job description, the Human Resources Department will evaluate the job description and assign it a pay grade based on similar positions internally and externally by comparing to nearby counties and private sector employers when applicable.
3. The new position with the pay grade and pay wage will be submitted to the Commissioners Work Session. If approved, the new position will then go to the Salary board for formal approval.

B. The following steps are required before recruiting for an **existing** position:

1. The supervisor must review the current job description for accuracy making any changes necessary to ensure the job description is a good representation of the position.
2. After the job description has been reviewed and approved by the Human Resources Department, permission to post the vacancy must be approved by the Salary Board. If the revised job description qualifies for a higher beginning pay rate, with a change in salary scale, this too must be approved by the Salary Board prior to advertising the position.

In order to avoid a delay in the hiring process, the Request for Board Action form that explains the changes to the job description, and pay rate if applicable, should be submitted to the Chief Clerk as soon as the vacancy occurs for Commissioners Work Session and Salary Board.

3. If the vacancy is approved by the Salary Board, the supervisor will receive notification of the decision. The Human Resources Department will post the vacancy utilizing the on line application system, various College recruiting apps and websites, as well as Career Link.

4. The Human Resources Department will notify the department if the vacancy is not approved by the Salary Board.

**Recruitment:**

The County of Adams is an equal opportunity employer. It is our policy to grant equal employment opportunities to qualified persons without regard to race, religion, creed, ancestry, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, pregnancy, familial status, veteran status, genetic information and any other categories protected by federal, state or local laws. The County will provide equal opportunities in promotion, wages, benefits and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment. Complaints or other communication concerning possible discrimination should be raised with the Director of Human Resources or the County Commissioners or President Judge where applicable.

Vacancies will be posted on the County website and on the ADP Portal that each employee has access to. They may also be advertised in suitable publications and through various other employment-related entities, such as Career Link, various college apps and websites, and the County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) website. All applications must be completed on the applicant tracking system. No mailed in applications are accepted.

Recognizing that students in their last year or less of an applicable course of study may be excellent candidates in many departments including the Children and Youth department, positions may be advertised at the following colleges: Shippensburg State University, Penn State University, Mt St Mary's University and McDaniel College.

Current County employees will be considered for promotional advancement, considering such things as the employee's performance record, abilities, personal credentials and previous work experience. Most former employees are eligible for rehire. However, former employees who quit without notice or were terminated for cause are not eligible for rehire by the County.

The following steps are in support of the Employment Policy and are intended to facilitate uniform recruitment and hiring procedures for all County newly hired employees that, in turn, will assist in the protection of the County, as the employer, with potential legal problems and risk management responsibilities.

1. The County reserves the right to make a decision not to post a vacancy due to business conditions such as when a position is eliminated, and an employee needs to be placed elsewhere or if an Intern is qualified to move into the vacant position.

2. Interns may be considered for open positions if they have met all of the requirements of the County of Adams intern program once, they have successfully completed their course of study and meet the minimum requirements of the position. For purposes of hiring, interns shall be considered internal candidates for vacant positions.
3. The Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) program is a cooperative effort among the United States Administration for Children and Families, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and fourteen undergraduate social work degree programs in Pennsylvania accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Its goal is to strengthen public child welfare services in Pennsylvania by providing educational opportunities for undergraduate social work majors preparing for employment in one of Pennsylvania's 67 public child welfare agencies. Qualified persons who are enrolled as social work majors in any of the approved schools on either a full-time or part-time basis may receive an educational fellowship in return for a contractual obligation to accept employment in a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency following their studies. If a student completes their internship with 975 hours of Children and Youth working experience, and earns their bachelor's degree, that student will be eligible to apply at the Caseworker 2 level under the County of Adams Merit Hire System. Furthermore, this student will be eligible to apply as an internal candidate to the County.
4. All vacancies, internal and external, (with the exception of the above) must be posted. A vacancy is defined as a position available due to someone leaving the County's employ on a voluntary or involuntary basis, or due to the creation of a new position. The posting of a vacancy is accomplished by utilizing the County's online application system for fourteen days initially, with the exception being an internal posting of seven days to check for internal interest and then posting externally for fourteen days if necessary.
5. Any department interested in participating in a job fair should contact the Human Resources Department.
6. If a department wishes to utilize the services of an employment agency, the department should contact Human Resources. The Commissioners must pre-approve the utilization of an employment agency and if approved the Human Resources Department will work with the agency on the department's behalf.
7. All bargaining unit positions will be posted according to the process established by the applicable collective bargaining agreement. Departments must contact a representative from the Human Resources Department to initiate the collective bargaining agreement job posting.
8. All job descriptions are kept electronically in the Human Resources Department.
9. All applications for employment must be completed online for a specific position. Internal candidates must complete an updated employment application and should be given first consideration for vacancies by the corresponding Hiring Team. This does not

mean that an internal candidate must be selected (or even interviewed if he/she does not meet minimum qualifications per posting) if he/she is not the most suitable candidate.

10. Most positions will require a resume from the applicant as well. These can be uploaded by the candidate in the applicant tracking system.
11. Applications that meet the minimum qualifications will be selected by the Human Resources Representative and made available to the Hiring Team for review.

There are several items to consider when reviewing the application:

1. Does the applicant meet the minimal qualifications as defined on the job description and job posting?
2. Availability. Can the applicant work the necessary days and hours?
3. Legal right to work in the United States. Contact the Human Resources Department if an applicant checks off that he/she is not eligible to work in the United States.
4. History of problems. What are the reasons the applicant terminated or left from previous employment?
5. Unexplained gaps in work history. The hiring team should question the applicant about the gaps during the interview process.
6. Previous criminal convictions. Are any of these applicable to the position? Do any of these disqualify this candidate from the position?

There are several items to consider when reviewing the resume:

1. Compatibility. Does a reasonable match exist between what the applicant is seeking and the actual vacant position?
2. Is the resume professional, easy to understand, and complete?
3. Does the resume confirm the information on the application?

The HR team member will utilize a spreadsheet for all Merit Hire employees that

- a) Lists all applications received
- b) Lists lead candidates based on qualifications, experience, and salary requirements
- c) Lists possible candidates that don't appear to be as good a match as the lead candidates but appear to come close and would be considered
- d) Lists candidates that do not qualify

If no suitable candidates are identified through the recruiting process, the Human Resources team member will determine if additional advertising is needed or if the position should be reopened externally for an additional seven days. The Human Resources team member will work closely with the Hiring Team to determine the most efficient and effective sources of advertising.

The Hiring Team must notify the Human Resources team member of availability for interviews and specify which applicants he/she wants to interview. In an effort to be as efficient as possible with everyone's time and resources, the Human Resources team member should recommend limiting the number of applicants to be interviewed to the top 3-4 most qualified candidates.

The Human Resources team member will schedule the interviews for both internal and external candidates. There will be an initial interview and then a second-round interview for the best candidates based on the initial interview.

### **Interview and Selection**

The Human Resources team member will ensure all members of the Hiring Team are aware that the following should NOT be **discussed** or **obtained** prior to a conditional offer of employment being extended:

Age/Date of Birth  
Marital Status or any information regarding family situation  
Medical Information  
Race  
Religion  
Sexual Preference  
National Origin  
Political Affiliation

**This includes photocopies of Drivers' Licenses, Photo Identification, or any Identification Cards, etc.**

This list may not be all-inclusive - managers should consult with the Human Resources team member for any specific information.

The hiring team will utilize structured panel interview methodology and rank the candidates by using the Interview Evaluation Form where Veteran status will be noted. Structured interviews support merit hire when they are based on a solid job analysis and are relevant to the position being filled. Interview Evaluation Forms are specific to each position.

1. Once candidates are selected for second round interviews a job assessment for the position will be provided online by a third-party vendor for certain positions. Online

tests to check for specific skills may also be utilized based on the position. This assessment, any online test results, along with the in-person interviews, will be used to make a final determination. \*\*\*support staff positions will receive hard skill assessments to complete prior to being scheduled for an interview. This is proof that the candidate has the required computer skills that are an essential function of the positions.

2. The role of the Human Resources team member in the interview will be to cover general information, such as pay ranges and applicable benefits if selected, confirm/explore information from the original application, such as dates of and/or gaps in employment and work-related reference information, assessment questions, and include the distribution of the applicable job description for the current vacancy.
3. The role of the Hiring Team will be to cover information pertinent to his/her office and the vacant position, such as education, training and specific skills needed for the position.
4. Once the interview results are discussed and the Hiring Team selects a preferred candidate, the Human Resources Department will put together a Request for Board Action for the Salary Board to approve at the next public session. This Request for Board Action will include the job title, start date, and suggested rate of pay as well as stipulate any possible increases prior to the next General Wage Increase for all employees of the County. Once the Salary Board approves the Request for Board Action the applicant will be offered the position based on the successful pre-employment testing and background checks required for the position.
5. Applicants entitled to veterans' preference who meet all required employment criteria receive additional consideration in recognition of their military service pursuant to the PA Military Code, 51PA C.S.A. Sec. 101. In the case that there are more than one equally qualified applicants, and one requests veterans' preference, the veteran shall be offered the position.
6. The Children & Youth Department will ensure that the required backgrounds for working with children in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are conducted. These include FBI Criminal Background Check (Act 73), Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check (Act 34), and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 33).
7. When applicable for the sensitivity of the position an FBI fingerprint will be conducted.
8. The Human Resources Department will conduct all reference checks. The County employment application includes a reference check release in the body of the application document.
9. Reference checks are required to verify the validity of the information the candidate provided on the application/resume and/or during the interview. Educational qualifications, work experience, military records, etc. should be verified. Reference checks may not always be successful. Many employers are very reluctant to divulge any

information regarding the candidate. However, most will verify very basic information. Reference checks are sent via email to the references provided.

10. The Human Resources Department will ensure a criminal background check is done on the selected candidate. This background check includes federal, state and local criminal histories. The candidate is also sent for a pre-employment drug screening by the HR team member. The drug test will be done by walk in at any Work First location in Hanover, York or Gettysburg. Due to medical confidentiality the hiring team will not be given any details of the drug test other than pass or fail.
11. Once the Children & Youth Department and the HR Department have completed all pre-employment activities as listed above, clarified any questions, concerns with the applicant, the HR Department will extend an offer of employment. All candidates who were interviewed but not selected will be notified by email.

### **REHIRE**

The County of Adams may consider an individual for rehire when an employee has left voluntarily with sufficient notice of resignation, worked at least two weeks in entirety before his/her last day of work, and had no recorded performance issues of a written warning or higher within two years of leaving.

To be considered for rehire the individual must submit a new application and will be considered along with other qualified candidates for the position. The pay rate will be in compliance with the position pay scale.

### **DEMOTIONS**

When a demotion is in the best interest of the employee and the County of Adams it will be granted to the employee. The pay will be recalculated based on the pay grade and years of service. The County of Adams does not encourage demotions.

### **INTERNAL TRANSFERS**

1. It is the responsibility of the employee to give a written 14-day notice to his/her current department if they are selected and accept a transfer to a position in another department.
2. It is the responsibility of Human Resources to include the application of the current employee in the interviews made available to the hiring team if he/she meets the minimum qualifications.
3. It is the responsibility of the supervisor who is receiving the transferring employee to notify Human Resources of the hiring decision.

4. It is the responsibility of Human Resources to present the Personnel Action Form and any clarifying documentation to the Salary Board for approval prior to the official job offer.
5. The current supervisor should understand and encourage the employee in his/her career goals, assist in defining career objectives and encourage the employee to pursue career development.

## **Merit Hire Employee Performance Reviews**

Per the Merit Hire program all newly hired, promoted, or transferred employees must have a six-month probationary performance evaluation. In order for an employee to move out of probationary status, they must have an overall performance rating of “meets expectations.” The probationary period of an employee may be extended by discretion of the supervisor. After the six-month probationary performance evaluation, a one year from hire date evaluation is completed and then done annually. Overall performance ratings are ranked by exceptional, exceeds expectations, meets expectations, nearly meets expectations, and fails to meet expectations. Employee performance reviews may be used for promotion, demotion and other employment decisions. Employee performance reviews are appealable under the ADR policy as employee work performance appraisals.

## **FURLOUGH POLICY**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set standard furlough procedures for Merit Hire employees in the Department of Children and Youth Services. Furloughs may be necessary for the County when there is a lack of need, or funds, for one or more positions in a department.

**Affected Individuals:** All merit hire employees in the Department of Children and Youth Services for the County of Adams.

### **Definitions:**

**Furlough:** A temporary layoff from work granted to an employee due to special needs such as lack of funds or needs of a position.

**Probationary Employee:** A new hire within their first six months of employment on a full-time 40 hour work week.

**Regular Full-Time Employee:** an employee who works 40 hours per week and has successfully completed their six-month probationary period as noted on their six month performance appraisal.

### **Procedures:**

1. The need for a furlough shall be designated at the discretion of the County Commissioners, Department Director, and Human Resources Director. When the need for furlough has been assigned, the Human Resources Office will work with the Director in determining the order of layoff for the impacted department.
2. Employees in a department will be separated by the categories of probationary employees and regular full-time employees. In the situation where a furlough is necessary, all probationary employees would be furloughed first in order of hire date. The probationary employee with the least seniority would be separated first in which the following separations would follow in that order.
3. Once all probationary employees have been separated from employment, regular full-time employees would be evaluated on seniority if additional separations for the department were needed.
4. Once the determination is made on which employees will be separated from employment, the employees should be given a furlough notice as soon as possible but no later than 14 days from the date in which that employee will be separated. The notice will include the employee's recent job title, reason for furlough, the date of separation, and the appeal rights under the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

## **Return to Work List**

1. Every employee that was separated from employment due to the furlough will be placed on a return to work list with the most recent separated employee at the top of the list. An employee will have the right to vacancies in their department and classifications in which they were separated for one year from their furlough date.
2. When an opening occurs in the impacted department, HR will review the furlough list with the Department Director and offer employment to the person at the top of the list so long as they are qualified for the position. Once employment is accepted, the employee would be reinstated at the same rate and benefits package that they had before separation unless an agreement is made for a different position and pay rate. If a person on the return to work list refuses employment that they are qualified for, they would be taken off of the list and would need to reapply for future openings with the County. If an employee finds other work within, or outside, the County they would be taken off of the return to work list.
3. It is the furloughed employee's responsibility to keep all contact information updated with Human Resources while waiting for employment on the return to work list.
4. Human Resources would continue down the return to work list as needed until the list was complete by from employees either accepting or rejecting employment offers made.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY**

**Purpose:** To define and specify the policy and procedures regarding political activity engaged in by the employees of the Adams County Government.

**Affected Individuals:** This policy applies to employees in the Children and Youth Department.

### **Definitions:**

- A. Adams County-** The County of Adams and the Adams County Board of Commissioners and all departments thereof.
- B. Employee-** Any individual employed by the Adams County Children and Youth Department excluding elected officers and appointed personnel.
- C. Hatch Act-** The Act promulgated by the Congress of the United States and codified at 5 U.S.C. sections 1501-1508.
- D. Nonpartisan Election-** An election at which none of the candidates are to be nominated by, or elected as the nominee of, a political party whose candidate for President of the United States received votes at the most recent preceding election at which such votes were cast.
- E. Permitted Activity-** employees may register and vote as they choose, assist in voter registration drives, express opinions about candidates and issues, contribute money to political organizations, attend political fundraising functions, attend and be active at political rallies and meetings, join and be active members of a political party or club, sign and circulate nominating petitions, campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments and/or municipal ordinances, campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections, make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections, distribute campaign literature in partisan elections, campaign for and hold office in political clubs or parties, volunteer to work on a partisan political campaign, be a candidate for and hold public office and otherwise participate in any activity not specifically prohibited by law or regulation.
- F. Prohibited Activity-** Under no circumstances whatsoever may an employee engage in permitted political activities while on duty as a County employee. Furthermore, an employee may not run for public office in a partisan election if his/her salary from the County is paid in full by federal loans or grants whether paid directly or indirectly through state and federal agencies. Finally, no eligible employee who runs for public office in a nonpartisan or partisan election may (i) use federal or other public funds to support his/her candidacy; (ii) use any County resources to support his/her candidacy, including the use of email, stationary, office supplies, or other County equipment, or (iii) ask or otherwise recruit subordinates to volunteer for or otherwise contribute to the campaign.
- G. Exempted Persons and Positions-** The Governor and Lieutenant Governor of a state or an individual, authorized by law, to act as the Governor, the mayor of a city, a duly elected head of an executive department of a state or municipality who is not classified under a state or municipal merit or civil-service system; or an individual holding elective office.

**Policy:** Adams County recognizes the importance of the electoral process and system to the lives of its officers and employees, as well as to all citizens of the County. Accordingly, the

County strongly encourages all officers and employees to exercise their respective franchise in the proper manner and at the proper time and place. This does not mean, nor should it be so interpreted, that the County wishes to see any of its employees engaged in any of the proscribed political activities, defined hereinabove, while said employee is at work.

Adams County serves a diverse population that is of every conceivable political persuasion. It is vital to the interest of the County that its employees neither engage in, nor appear to engage in partisan political activity during working hours at County worksites. Any employee found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

In the event that there is a nonpartisan ballot initiative or referendum in which an employee wishes to become engaged, he/she should consult with his/her supervisor, who will seek guidance from the Department of Human Resources and the Solicitor's Office, prior to engaging in any political activity whatsoever.

**Responsibilities:**

- A. The Department of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that this policy is thoroughly disseminated to all employees. Further, it shall be the Department of Human Resource's responsibility to provide guidance and information to employees as to what is expected of them, by the County, in conjunction with the implementation of this policy.
- B. The Solicitor's Office is responsible for assisting the Department of Human Resources in answering any questions that may arise in connection with the adoption and implementation of this policy. Furthermore, the Board of Commissioners, elected officials and department heads may seek advisory opinions and/or guidance from the Solicitor's Office, in those instances in which the same is required in order for them to carry out and fulfill their duties.
- C. The Human Resources Director's office is responsible for disseminating this policy through County e-mail to all employees on an annual basis.
- D. Employees are responsible for seeking guidance from their supervisors on any matters involving political activity about which they are unsure. In the event that the employee's supervisor is unable to assist them in addressing the questions or concerns, the individual may singly or jointly with his/her supervisor, seek further assistance, to obtain a resolution of the query, from the Department of Human Resources and/or the Solicitor's Office.