



FRANKLIN COUNTY

Human Resources Department

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TO: Members of the Senate State Government Committee

FROM: Tiffany L. Bloyer, MS, MBA, PHR, SHRM-CP
Human Resources Director

DATE: April 11, 2018

RE: Senate Bill 1037 Remarks

As the Human Resources Director for Franklin County Government, I have had the opportunity to oversee the recruitment and hiring under the State Civil Service Commission (SCSC) as well as a Merit Hire System. Upon being hired in February 2011, I was tasked with moving from SCSC to Merit Hire. After years of reviewing our human service practices, County-wide policies and procedures, and making significant changes to both policies and procedures, we were able to submit the packet to move from SCSC to a Merit Hire system, in February 2014. For Franklin County it has been a well-received change, both for human services as well as human resources.

Prior to being a Merit Hire system, we could barely fill positions: we would have the same applicants who weren't truly a good fit or lacked qualification. The testing was from many years ago and it was standard practice to promote an employee simply based on how long they worked for the County. This was not effective for Franklin County. There were numerous times we would wait months to have people be on the list for positions, which created difficulty when trying to fill positions that are so vital to the services we provide. Being understaffed can cause many complications in the workplace but impacting the safety of others is most significant. The delay with the process caused major backlogs and undue stress on workers, supervisors, and the consumers. Since moving to Merit Hire, we have seen the timeframe to hire someone go from months and years to just 30-45 days. This is significant and greatly appreciated by the Human Service agencies looking to fill their positions in a timely manner.

Since our approval to move to a Merit Hire system, effective July 1, 2015, we have seen remarkable improvements. Not only are the number of applicants significantly higher, they are of a much higher caliber, with such a broad range of experience and diversity. It's been amazing to see the candidates we are receiving. Ironically, I feel that Merit Hire provides for even more of an opportunity to be more fair and consistent with our hiring practices. Below you will find some data that speaks to our change to Merit Hire and the success it has allowed our County to experience from the hiring and retention perspective.

In July 2016, we received a report from SCSC that shared that we had the following total number of individuals on certification lists:

- 133 for Area Agency on Aging, 16 for MH/ID; 67 for CYS; and 3 people available on our list for Drug and Alcohol positions, from dates July 1, 2014 to July 1, 2015.
- At any given time, we have a minimum of 2 applicants and up to 33 applicants for positions. Since moving to Merit Hire, it is consistently in the 10 plus range of applicants.

We are thankful for the testing assessments which have been modernized and help us determine who is the best qualified, often before being interviewed. We are appreciative that we can determine a supervisor's ability to have effective leadership skills, not merely based on the number of years in their position as a caseworker. Leadership is imperative to the effectiveness of any given department, and it's key to the success of employees, especially in the field of human services which is stressful and exhausting. An effective leader can have a compelling impact on their employees and turnover.

Since moving to Merit Hire, we have had the opportunity to recruit from local colleges and universities and we have also had the opportunity to hire a more diverse workforce. Our workforce has an average age of 43 in 2018 vs. 41 in 2015; we have had the ability to reach older workers; and we have had the ability to hire more minorities. We actively work with our Veteran's Affairs Director to make him aware of positions we are recruiting for and to ask him to share opportunities with his consumers, as well.

Moving to Merit Hire has been a great journey for Franklin County. We have had the opportunity to make a difference in the community by having a more diverse workforce; provide a realistic turnaround time, without losing great candidates due to the previous slow process of SCSC. Overall it has been the best thing we have done for Human Services. We are grateful to be able to hire at the local level, for not only the reasons above, but for the ability to select the finest candidates that fit our workplace, based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this experience with you.