

Department of Human Resources

2022 Budget Statement

OPENING

Good afternoon, Chairman Dowell, and esteemed members of the City Council, and thank you for the opportunity to present the proposed Department of Human Resources (“DHR”) budget for 2022.

DHR provides human resources services to job applicants and City employees, and we work in partnership with City departments, boards, and commissions to attract and retain quality personnel. In addition to managing a fair and equitable hiring process, we are responsible for all human resources functions within the City, such as: human resources records management and retention, classification and compensation, training, testing, and writing and enforcing City policies, including the City’s Equal Employment Opportunity, Reasonable Accommodation, and Violence in the Workplace policies. It is our mission to administer cost-effective HR services, and foster a professional, inclusive, and thriving workforce.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year continued to be shaped by the pandemic and its impact on the 2021 budget and operations. We worked with the Chicago Department of Public Health to help staff and schedule the City’s vaccination PODs. We also worked with City departments and the sister agencies to get employees vaccination appointments as soon as employees were eligible to receive the vaccine.

This past spring we worked with the Chicago Department of Transportation to fill 102 construction positions for their capital project. We filled 33 Concrete Laborers, 33 Asphalt Laborers, 11 Cement Finishers, and 25 Hoisting Engineers for this year’s construction season. We also made sure to provide information to the City Council about the positions and where constituents could apply.

We also worked with CDPH to fill positions for their Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) Program. Five Health Crisis Clinicians and one Senior Director of Crisis Services were hired for this new initiative. We worked with CDPH to fill these vacancies on time so that they were able to start this important initiative.

Our Information Services Division recently implemented DocuSign which we will be able to use in the onboarding process for new City employees. This solution will both reduce the need for paper documents and speed up the process by eliminating the need for candidates to have to make appointments to complete new hire paperwork.

Our Training and Development team continued to transition trainings to an on-line learning format, which included courses on Excellence in Customer Service, and training for Human Resource Liaisons on the City’s Family and Medical Leave Act Policy. Our Training team also worked with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities to create a Disability Awareness course.

Our Testing Division continued to utilize remote testing processes, including transitioning the entry-level Police Officer exam to a computer-based testing process. Candidates had the option of taking the test at home using their own equipment or reporting to testing sites which are located throughout the City as well as the country, including on many military bases. We will continue to provide this computer-based testing for Police Officers throughout 2022. In addition, we recently announced that we will be doing in-person testing at every City College in both October and December. We continue to work with the Chicago Police

Department and the Office of Public Safety Administration on recruiting for this exam, including recruitment efforts at each of the City Colleges.

Our EEO Division made revisions to the City's EEO Policy that clarify some aspects of the investigation process and actions that can be taken on complaints from non-City employees.

Finally, we completed revisions to the City's Hiring Plan. The revised document, known as the City of Chicago Employment Plan, contains several significant changes, including a promotional process for current City employees, more flexibility for internships and job training programs, and expanded ability to interview and make job offers at career fairs and other recruiting events. We will be training departments on these changes in October.

GOALS

We will be providing the next Firefighter/EMT exam in the first quarter of 2022. Using the target market process with the Department of Procurement Services, we have identified a vendor to conduct a recruitment campaign. That vendor will be helping us to recruit from areas of the City where we have historically seen under-representation from applicants. We plan to transition FF/EMT testing to a model that is similar to how we test for entry-level Police Officer, where we are testing fewer candidates but more frequently. We will be communicating with the City Council about recruitment events and other information about this test soon.

We will also be partnering with the City Colleges of Chicago to develop career pathways, including apprenticeship programs, across multiple disciplines, including public safety, health, and IT. We will be working with City Colleges to provide on-the-job learning for their students while they are taking classes related to their particular program.

Our EEO Division is finalizing a new Religious Accommodation Policy that we will issue later this year. The new Policy helps to clarify the process for employees who are requesting a religious accommodation.

Finally, we will be working with the Office of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, and other stakeholder departments to begin the process of updating our Human Resources Information System (HRIS). Our current HRIS is nearly twenty years old and because it is out-of-date, many of our processes still rely on paper. Replacing the HRIS will help modernize our processes, reduce paperwork and put us in a position to automate more of our processes, including on-boarding and performance evaluations.

IN CLOSING

Thank you, Chairman Dowell and City Council, for your support of DHR. It has been an honor to work with you in our joint quest to improve human resources services to the City, and I look forward to our work ahead.

I also want to both acknowledge and thank my staff who have all risen to the challenges that were presented this year. We all worked very closely together to keep our operations moving so that we were able to continue supporting our departments during the pandemic. It is a privilege to work with them all.