

Department of Human Resources

2023 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 2023.

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 and development, 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

Our primary focus this year has been evaluating the hire process in order to provide more flexibility for departments and to speed up the process. Working with the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) we established a working group to review the entire process from beginning to end and we began making changes to aspects of the hire process almost immediately in an effort to reduce time-to-fill. For hire sequences, where we successfully filled the position we have brought our time-to-fill down to approximately 80 days from over 120 days. As a result, we are currently on track to fill approximately 5000 positions by the end of the year. We also worked with the OIG to update the City’s Hiring Plan to further streamline the hiring process and to provide important flexibility for the City to offer training and apprenticeship programs.

We also evaluated DHR’s staffing model by comparing our staffing levels to the HR functions of other organizations. We determined that our staffing ratio was significantly lower than average, which is why, as part of the 2023 budget, we are adding 48 new positions. This proposed restructuring of DHR will help modernize the department by introducing a centralized Labor Relations division, adding resources for organizational and workforce strategy, and restructuring our Employment Services Division to better address the increasing and changing hiring needs of the City.

We also collaborated with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Office of Public Safety Administration (OPSA) to provide maximum opportunities and flexibility to candidates for the entry-level Police Officer exam. We began offering on-line testing opportunities for Police Officer candidates beginning in January which allowed candidates to take a computer-based test at their home or by signing up to take the test at designated testing sites across both the city and the country, including on military bases. In addition, we have offered four in-person testing events at the City Colleges. Candidates were given the option to choose the City College location where they wanted to test, as well as the date and time slot. We also welcomed walk-in candidates at all City Colleges on the exam dates. We are conducting two more in-person tests at the City Colleges later this month and, again, in December.

We recently began taking applications for the entry-level Firefighter/EMT exam that will be administered in December. The last time this exam was given was in 2014. We have taken a new approach to administering the exam in order to provide more opportunities for applicants in the long run by offering testing much more frequently. Rather than inviting approximately 25,000 candidates to test and then

conducting a lottery to determine entry into the academy, we are conducting the lottery earlier and inviting approximately 4500 candidates to test. This will save nearly \$3.5 million dollars and put us in a position where we can post the position again in two years. By administering smaller, more frequent tests, we can align the size of the applicant pool to our actual hiring needs – giving test-takers more realistic expectations, ensuring CFD has a fresh list of interested candidates, and enabling active recruitment of a diverse pool of candidates on an ongoing basis. This year, for the first time, we have used a vendor to assist with the recruitment campaign for the test. The vendor is a Minority and Women- Owned (M/WBE) firm and their focus is increasing diversity in the applicant pool.

Finally, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office, we have made changes to the City's Paid Parental Leave Policy. Under the new policy, all City employees will receive up to twelve (12) weeks paid parental leave regardless of whether they are the birthing or non-birthing parent. This policy applies to those growing their family by birth, adoption, or foster care, as well as for those acting as a surrogate who will qualify for 8 weeks. Providing time to bond and heal for new parents is a critical benefit and also a tool to increase retention and diversify the City's workforce,

GOALS

In support of the Mayor's Citywide Strategic Plan to Address Gender-based Violence and Human Trafficking, DHR is working with the Mayor's Office and a non-profit training and technical assistance organization to develop mandatory training programs for City employees. DHR has already assisted in the facilitation of focus groups with City employees to gain a better understanding of how gender-based violence and harassment impact the workplace and to ensure that the training is informed by employees' experiences and needs. This training seeks to create safer and more equitable workplaces, which will undoubtedly help us to recruit and retain employees across government.

We are also working with the CPD to establish a testing schedule for all promotional exams for the department. We will be increasing the frequency of hiring and promotional opportunities so that CPD members have ample opportunity for career progression. We are moving towards holding promotional exams on a three-year cycle rather than the current 5-7-year cycle. Additionally, we are working with CPD on creating a survey to provide to candidates taking the Detective exam to get their feedback on the application and exam process so that we can make changes to the process to better meet their needs. We are also building more transparency into the promotional process by improving the testing appeals process and providing developmental feedback reports for test-takers.

Citywide, our work to decrease time-to-fill and modernize the City's hiring process will continue to be a focus in 2023. We are also continuing to work with the Department of Assets, Information, and Services to update and modernize our IT systems.

Finally, we are working on a comprehensive salary review for all non-union positions at the City in order to address salary compression. We are working with a vendor to gather relevant market data to ensure that our salary structure is in line with other government agencies. At the same time, we are also reviewing titles and job descriptions to ensure that they are up-to-date and meet the needs of our City departments.

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 worked hard this year to make changes to our processes and support the HR function across the City. It is a privilege to work with them all.