

Department of Human Resources 2023 Budget Statement

OPENING

Good afternoon, Chairman Ervin, and esteemed members of the City Council, and thank you for the opportunity to present the proposed Department of Human Resources (“DHR”) budget for 2024.

DHR supports various human resources functions for our 38 operating departments and for over 31,000 employees, of which over 90% are represented by one of our 44 local union partners. Our team develops and administers pass/fail tests for employment, screens job applications, and develops referral lists for vacancies across the city. Each operating department is responsible for managing their own interview and selection processes, employee relations, and administration of policies and discipline in line with DHR’s guidance.

Our mission is to administer cost-effective HR services, and to foster a professional, inclusive, and thriving workforce. DHR also creates and maintains job classification and compensation recommendations for over 1,400 active job titles. Our team works with departments to ensure compliance with the City’s updated Employment Plan, State and Federal requirements, including medical testing, fingerprinting, and background checks. Our HRIS team creates and maintains all employee records and manages all DHR webpages and works closely with AIS, now DIT on internal systems, including the TALEO online application, DocuSign onboarding, and Electronic Employee Document Management System (EEDMS). Our Compliance Division manages the City’s Reasonable Accommodation, Employee Assistance, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Violence in the Workplace programs. And our Labor Relations division provides counsel to departments on labor, personnel, and employment matters.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our primary focus this year has been to continue to streamline and modernize the hire process in order to provide more flexibility for departments and to continue to reduce our time-to-hire. We established a working group with the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) to review the hire process from beginning to end, and together, we have made improvements that will reduce time-to-fill. Such as the introduction and training on a new electronic onboarding process using DocuSign. DocuSign is a platform used across the world that easily allows individuals to securely complete confidential paperwork in a safe and efficient manner. This helps to reduce the number of visits a new employee must make to a department just to complete hiring paperwork and processing.

We also have partnered with OBM, DPS, Finance and AIS/DIT to select a new Enterprise Resource Planning software to replace our current HR system that is 20 years old. This new system will provide a more robust application platform, also known as an Applicant Tracking System or ATS. The ATS will provide better data tracking and communication to candidates and will reduce time to fill by eliminating manual or work around steps in the process that are required by our

collective bargaining agreements. This new system will also integrate directly with our onboarding platform, DocuSign, and provide a seamless flow of data for candidates directly from their application to their profile as a new employee.

We have begun an internal effort to document Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across our hiring activities and are using this as an opportunity to further refine our process and better prepare for our upcoming ERP implementation.

In 2023, the DHR has released two policies, the new City of Chicago Religious Accommodation Policy and a revised Diversity & Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (“EEO Policy”). The Religious Accommodation Policy codifies and formalizes the pre-existing procedures for reviewing requests from applicants and employees seeking accommodation related to a sincerely held religious belief or religious practice. The revised EEO Policy contains an updated definition of sexual harassment, expanded language related to relationships between supervisors and subordinates, and a revised section on timeliness of complaints, among other changes. Upcoming policy work for 2023/2024 includes revisions of various City policies & procedures in order to better comply with recent changes or updates to state & federal law.

We established a working group with OIG to meet on a biweekly cadence to discuss and implement additional changes to the City’s Employment Plan and operating procedures to further streamline the hiring process and to provide important flexibility for the City to offer training and apprenticeship programs.

We evaluated DHR’s staffing model by comparing our staffing levels to HR functions of similar organizations. We determined that our staffing ratio is significantly lower than average, which is causing backlogs in our processes, and we were granted additional positions. We are currently working to fill these positions. This is the start of a restructuring that will help modernize the department by introducing a centralized Labor Relations division and by restructuring of our Employment Services Division to better address the evolving hiring needs of the City.

To address police staffing challenges, we have collaborated with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Office of Public Safety Administration (OPSA) to address the Consent Decree mission to ensure the City is reforming our trainings and policies. Specifically, DHR is working with the larger team to provide maximum opportunity and flexibility to candidates for the entry-level Police Officer exams and to refine our promotional exam policies. We began offering on-line testing for Police Officer candidates in 2023. This allowed candidates to take a computer-based test at home or at designated testing sites in Chicago and across the country (including on military bases). In addition, we have offered in-person testing events each month at City Colleges. Candidates were given the option to choose a City College location, as well as the date and time slot. We also welcomed walk-in candidates at all City Colleges on exam dates.

GOALS

In support of the Mayor’s strategy to increase youth employment, DHR is working with the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Workforce Division to bolster programs for individuals between the ages of 14-24 that will help to highlight the City of Chicago as an

employer of choice. Together we are partnering with CDOT to implement a program with City Colleges of Chicago that is geared toward upskilling individuals for positions in various trades such as Machinist apprentice and laborer and will expand to even more titles in 2024.

To promote social and economic mobility among youth, we began a partnership with the College and Career Success team at the Chicago Public Schools that we hope to expand this year. We attended the Skilled Trades Career Fair and had an opportunity to connect with students to showcase and introduce career opportunities and pathways.

Citywide, our work to decrease time-to-fill and modernize the City's hiring process will continue to be a focus in 2024. We are also continuing to work with the Department of Technology Innovation to update and modernize our IT systems and look forward to the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system implementation that is just beginning. We are also pushing forward on efforts to properly document SOPs, consolidate processes, develop time-saving tools internally, and to provide up-to-date data for our workloads in progress.

Finally, we are continuing our work on a comprehensive salary review for all non-union positions at the City in order to address salary compression. This is a multiphase process. 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. We have completed two phases of the study that included 132 titles, including our new Department of IT titles. The vendor is currently studying our next set of titles which will address another 646 titles.

IN CLOSING

Thank you, Chairman Ervin and City Council, for your attention and support for DHR. It is an honor to work with such a dedicated group of public servants in our shared mission to improve the HR services we provide to our 31,000+ City employees, and I look forward to partnering with you going forward. I would also like to take a moment to thank my colleagues who have supported me over the past four months while I have been serving as Acting Commissioner. As with most municipalities, and frankly most employers, we are asked to do more with less and this group has made me proud of all that they have been able to do, especially during this time of transition. It is a privilege to work with them. With that, I hope we can answer any questions you may have about our proposed 2024 budget requests.