



Hiring Manager – FAQ



(hr)

Human Resources

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Frequently Asked Questions By Hiring Managers About Recruitment

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide hiring managers with a general overview of how to fill vacant positions.

This is NOT intended to be a comprehensive explanation of all intricacies that a hiring manager might face when recruiting for unique positions. This FAQ describes, in general, the rules impacting the most common recruitments and assumes the procedures for the County's largest bargaining units (primarily SEIU Local 521). It does not pertain to the hiring process for sworn law enforcement personnel.

Individual departments may also be covered by departmental agreements and other contract provisions that have their own procedures.

Disclaimer

The guidance here does not supersede specific direction provided by Human Resources.

Frequently Asked Questions

I have a vacancy in my unit. What are my options for recruitment?

There are four primary means of obtaining candidates to interview (formal title "eligible lists").

1. Transfer Opportunity

A transfer opportunity is a job posting open to only current regular County employees. Employees are eligible to transfer to positions in classifications that are no more than 10% -15% salary range above their current classification. The transfer band is derived from the salary difference between the two classifications, not the employee's step placement.

The transfer band is dictated by the Merit System Rule or applicable union contract. Employees must also meet the employment standards (also referred to as minimum qualifications, MQ's or mq's) as detailed in the job specification(s).

The hiring manager receives a list of all the candidates that applied to the transfer posting, who meet the employment standards and are within the transfer band.

For certain classifications, the department must post vacancies as a transfer opportunity before receiving candidates from a promotional or open competitive list.

2. Promotional List

A promotional recruitment is open only to current regular County employees. There is no requirement for qualified candidates to be within any transfer band. Candidates are evaluated against the employment standards and undergo an examination to rank for skills and abilities.

For a single vacancy, the hiring manager receives a list of the top ten scoring candidates who pass the examination, plus ties. One additional name, plus times, would be referred for each additional vacancy.

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3. Open Competitive List (informally called “Outside List”)

An open competitive recruitment is open to anyone (County employees as well as non-County employees).

Candidates are evaluated against the employment standards and undergo an examination(s) to rank for skills and abilities.

For a single vacancy, the hiring manager receives a list of the top ten scoring candidates who pass the examination, plus ties. Four additional names, plus ties, would be referred for each additional vacancy.

4. Re-Employment List

Re-employment lists are created due to layoffs. These include current and former employees who were impacted by layoffs. The candidates are in order of seniority in the classification from which they were laid-off. This type of list takes precedence over all other hiring methods.

Unless there is a Re-employment list, the hiring manager decides which path to pursue to fill a vacancy (unless a specific procedure is required by union contract or departmental agreement).

More than one path may be chosen to run concurrently, or in sequence, in order to select the best candidate. The processes through which you may select candidates are detailed in the County Merit System Rules.

What are Merit System Rules?

The Merit System Rules (MSR) are a set of regulations passed derived from the County Charter that govern many aspects of employment in the County, including the procedures for hiring, discipline, and termination of employment.

The goal of the Merit System Rules is to ensure the fairness of these processes so that employees and prospective employees of the County have equal opportunities to get hired, to advance, and to succeed.

The full text of the MSR can be found on the County website at

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Documents/County%20of%20Santa%20Clara%20Ordinance%20Code.pdf>.

Where can I get copies of Job Specifications?

You will find job specifications on our website: www.sccjobs.org. Click on the Classification header, and then select Job Specifications. You’ll see a search page where you can enter the job title to view the job specification.

The direct link is: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/santaclara/classspecs>

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What is an “eligible list?”

An open/competitive eligible list or a promotional eligible list includes all candidates who meet the employment standards of the classification and who have passed an examination for the recruitment. The names on the eligible list are ranked in the order of their examination scores.

What are the types of examinations that can be used to evaluate a candidate’s knowledge and abilities for the job?

Examinations may include, but are not be limited to an Application Appraisal, Competitive Rating, Performance Exam, Oral Exam, and Written Exam. Recruitments may have a combination of any of these examination methods.

What is the difference between an eligible list and a certification list?

An eligible list includes all the candidates who met the employment standards and passed the examination(s) for the recruitment.

A certification list (also known as a “cert list” or a “referred list”) is the list of candidates you can interview. The number of candidates on the certification list are based upon the Merit System Rule often called the “Rule of Ten.” All the candidates on the certification list should be considered equally regardless of their rank on the list.

I am told an eligible list already exists for the job classification for which I have a vacancy. How do I get the list of candidates to interview?

To obtain a certification list, submit a requisition in NEOGOV for your vacancy. Generally, if there is an active eligible list, your certification list will be available quickly, usually within 48 hours of submitting the requisition. Specific department procedures may be required prior to submitting the requisition; check with your HR Liaison for any department specific process.

If there are many qualified candidates, can I have the list filtered for specific skills?

Yes. Assuming the skill is something asked about on the job posting, you can have the list sorted and ranked (called “filtered”) based upon that criterion. The skill(s) can be something inherent in the job specifications or something upon which you provided supplemental questions when the recruitment was initiated.

In certain cases, HR can also survey the candidates on the eligible list to collect information, if a supplemental question wasn’t asked during the recruitment process.

Can I target the recruitment for only candidates who are fluent in another language?

Yes. This requirement should be stated in the language box on the requisition. HR will screen the existing eligible list for candidates; if no qualified candidates exist, then a stand-alone recruitment can be initiated for the required language.

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What happens if there is no existing eligible list?

If there is no eligible list, the requisition will be assigned to an analyst so a recruitment can be conducted.

The hiring manager will be asked to assist in the recruitment process by providing information about the skills and abilities necessary for the vacancy.

A hiring manager may consider other options including the use of extra-help (temporary employees), provisional appointments, work-out-of-class, or an alternate list. Contact your Human Resources Analyst to discuss these options.

How can the hiring manager be included in the recruitment process?

You can have input in the recruitment process in the following ways:

- by participating in the job analysis, which develops the criteria for the examination.
- by providing supplemental questions for the job posting directed to your specific needs.
- by assisting in the development of the actual examination that is used to test candidates' knowledge prior to creating the eligible list.

What is a Job Analysis?

A job analysis is a tool used by Human Resources to understand the requirements of the classification.

The typical tasks, knowledge, and abilities listed on the job specification are evaluated to understand what is most important. Also, evaluation is made on what knowledge can be trained as opposed to that which a candidate must possess from the start of employment. Based on this information, the examination is created, focusing on the most important areas.

The job analysis asks the Subject Matter Expert (SME) to rate how important the specific knowledge (K), ability (A) and tasks are for the job, if the specific K & A is required as soon as the person is hired, and if more of the K & A means the candidate is more likely to perform better in the job. With the typical tasks, the job analysis seeks to find out how important the specific task is to the job and how often the task is performed.

The results of the job analysis give HR a road map for the testing process. We will construct the exam to test the knowledge and skills that are most important for the job. Please note that the job analysis is specific to the job specification. While some positions in the classification require slightly different skills, the job analysis is trying to determine what is most important for the classification as a whole.

What if I need certain skills above and beyond those included on the County-wide Job Posting?

Depending on the classification and the skill(s) required, the eligible list can be filtered to create a certification list that includes only candidates who have indicated the skill sets you need for your vacant position. HR may, in certain instances, also send out a subsequent questionnaire to eligible list candidates seeking input on whether they possess a certain skill.

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If no current eligible list exists and you are initiating a new recruitment, a specialized recruitment could be conducted requiring the specific skills. These additional skills should be provided to HR in order to conduct a specialized recruitment specifically requesting candidates to address the needed skill when applying for the recruitment.

What is the "Rule of Ten?"

Pursuant to MSR, the top ten highest scoring candidates on the eligible list are certified (also called referred) to the hiring manager for interview for a single vacancy.

There are instances where tied scores can result in more than ten names. If fewer than ten people are on the eligible list a certified list may include fewer than ten names. You may also receive fewer than ten candidates on your certified list due to the use of filtering for skills requested by the hiring manager.

The “Rule of Ten” does not apply to transfer lists. With transfer lists, the hiring manager will receive all candidates who meet the employment standards and are within the transfer band.

I have more than one vacancy. Under the Rule of Ten, how many names will be certified from an Open Competitive list?

If the list is certified from an open competitive list, and if there is more than one vacancy, the hiring manager will be given a list of the top scoring ten candidates, plus four additional names for each additional vacancy (plus any tied scores).

Example of Multiple Vacancies: The hiring manager has four (4) vacant positions. Under the Rule of Ten, the top scoring ten names will be certified for the first position, PLUS 4 additional names for each additional vacant position.

When there are four vacancies, the hiring manager will receive a Certification List of 22 candidates plus ties from which to select. This is calculated as follows 10 names + 4 + 4 + 4 additional names = 22 names.

Example Certification list

An easy way to calculate the number of names you will receive is by using the following formula:

$((\# \text{ of vacancies} - 1) \times 4) + 10 = \# \text{ of names referred plus any ties.}$

I have more than one vacancy. Under the Rule of Ten, how many names will be certified from a Promotional list?

If the list is certified from a promotional list, and if there is more than one vacancy, the hiring manager will be given a list of the top scoring ten candidates, plus one additional name for each additional vacancy (plus any tie scores).

Example of Multiple Vacancies: The hiring manager has four (4) vacant positions. Under the Rule of Ten, the top scoring ten names will be certified for the first position, PLUS 1 additional name for each additional vacant position.

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Where there are four vacancies, the hiring manager will receive a Certification List of 13 candidates from which to select. This is calculated as follows $10 \text{ names} + 1 + 1 + 1 = 13$.

An easy way to calculate the number of names you will receive is by using the following formula:

$(\# \text{ of vacancies} - 1) + 10 = \# \text{ of names referred plus any ties}$.

Example of tie scores: You are hiring for two positions, so you would typically be given 10 names on your Certified List to interview. (10 names for the first position, plus 1 more additional name for the second position). If 10 people tied for 10th place, it means you would get the top 11 candidates plus the ten who tied for 11th place.

I have interviewed all candidates on the certification list but have not found a candidate suitable for my position. Will I be entitled to any more names to interview?

In certain circumstances, you may be entitled to additional candidates to consider. For example, if any candidate on your certification list declined to interview, or does not respond to the notification of interview opportunity, you may receive replacement names so that you have the full list of ten to interview and select from. Also, if you received ten candidates from an open competitive certification list, you may also obtain additional candidates to interview from a transfer list. If a candidate has already been interviewed unsuccessfully three times for the same classification in the same department, within a 6 month period a hiring manager can request that name be replaced as well.

However, pursuant to the MSR, you cannot obtain additional candidates from the open competitive or promotional list simply because you did not find that “right fit” from those interviewed, except under very specific circumstances outlined in the Merit System Rules. To obtain additional candidates, the eligible list would first need to be abolished and a brand-new recruitment initiated. Before going to that length, you may wish to consider filtering the existing eligible list for special skills.

What is a Competitive Rating Process?

A competitive rating is an examination method where a panel of SMEs review the application material and assign points for specific education, certifications, and/or experience. The evaluation is strictly done using pre-determined criteria of education, certifications, and experience in order to rank the candidates prior to placing the candidates on the eligible list. Human Resources works closely with job experts to determine the competitive rating scoring process.

If I am recruiting for many vacancies in the same job classification, is there a way to obtain a certification list with more candidates?

Such a need can arise in certain entry level positions with high levels of turnover. With potentially dozens of vacancies, only obtaining four additional candidates for each additional vacancy may result in an inadequate candidate pool. In such an instance you may wish to

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consider a ranking process called “Banding.” Banding is the grouping of scores at the top of the pool of prospective candidates rather than just the top scores. It is an approach where candidates having a test score in a specific range, called a “band,” are considered as having the same score. This method is used to provide a larger pool of candidates for a hiring manager to select from when certain criteria are met. To obtain details on banding, you should consult with your HR Analyst.

If I have already interviewed the same candidate several times, and I do not wish to select him/her do I need to keep interviewing the candidate on subsequent recruitments?

Such an instance is governed by the “Three Time Rule.” A department does not need to interview the same candidate for the same job classification more than three times in a six-month period when the candidate is referred from the same eligible list. However, it is up to the department to notify HR that you do not wish to continue to have that candidate certified to your department. You may be entitled to a replacement name in such an instance.

Do I need to contact all the candidates on my certification list for an interview, or are they responsible for contacting me?

For open competitive and promotional certification lists, you are not required to contact the candidate for an interview. The candidates receive notification in writing from HR. That notification instructs the candidates that they have three days to contact the hiring department to schedule an interview. You may contact the candidates yourself to schedule interviews, but if one candidate is contacted, you must attempt to contact all of them.

For transfer certification lists, you must reach out to the candidates. The notification the candidate receives instructs the candidates to wait five days before contacting the department.

Extra help do not get notified, so the Hiring Manager needs to contact those candidates they are interested in interviewing.

Am I allowed to conduct reference checks on the top candidate(s) to whom I may wish to extend an offer of employment?

Yes, you should conduct a reference check on the candidate(s) to whom you are considering making a job offer.

How do I make a hiring offer?

Once you have selected a candidate to whom you wish to extend an offer of employment you would customarily make a conditional verbal offer first. Exact practices differ among departments, so confer with your HR Analyst for protocols. Assuming the candidate accepts the conditional verbal offer, you would follow up with a written letter confirming the terms of the offer. Assuming a new hire to the County, the letter will also state that the offer is conditional upon passing a pre-employment background investigation and may include a physical examination, both of which will need to be completed and passed prior to the start of work.

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What do I need to do to conclude the recruitment process once hiring is completed?

Once the new hire is on board, the hiring manager needs to close out the recruitment. This is done online in the NEOGOV system. Whether it's the hiring manager, or department HR Liaison, who access NEOGOV varies by department. The hiring manager will need to provide objective criteria upon which selection or rejection of the candidates from the Certified List was determined. This information is maintained to ensure compliance with Merit System Rules and equal opportunity mandates.

I have an urgent operational need to fill a vacancy, and there is no eligible list for my vacant position. What can I do to get the work done while waiting for the new recruitment?

The County has several ways to bring on workers in non-permanent status to accomplish time-critical tasks pending a permanent recruitment. Below are some options available to departments. Note that each option has restrictions; therefore, the descriptions below are not all encompassing.

Provisional Appointment

A provisional appointment can be made if there is no eligible list for the job classification for which there is a vacancy. The County Personnel Director may authorize a provisional appointment up to one year or 90 days after the establishment of an eligible list, whichever is shorter. For the provisional appointee to become permanent, the provisional appointee must be "reachable" and selected from the certification list.

Alternate List

Depending on the job classification, you may fill your vacancy using a related job classification eligible list for which the employment standards are similar or higher than required for the job classification of your vacancy. To use an alternate list, the candidate selected must understand he is being hired at a lower rate of pay and job classification than what was originally applied for. The selected candidate would also remain active on the eligible list for the higher job classification, which may mean that the candidate may be selected for a higher position elsewhere in the County.

Unclassified Programs

For entry level classifications, there is a variety of unclassified programs that may help: The Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) Program, Employment Support Initiative (ESI), and CalWorks Employment Services (CWES) Program. Contact your Human Resources Analyst for more information on these employment programs.

Extra Help

This is temporary employment to meet a peak workload or unusual work situation. A person hired as Extra Help has a limit of 1,040 hours that they can work in any fiscal year.

Where can I learn more about the hiring process?

Additional resources can be found here:

- Employee Services Agency (ESA) website: www.sccjobs.org.

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- Human Resources Policies and Procedures page for links to the County Charter and other useful documents: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Pages/hrpp.aspx>
- Human Resources Practices Manual: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Pages/HR-Practices-Manual.aspx>
- Employee Development online course for hiring managers through SCCLearn: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/led/sccllearn/Pages/home.aspx>
- Hiring Options for Managers: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Documents/hiring-process-infographic.pdf>
- Recruitment Process for Managers: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Documents/manager-recruitment-infographic.pdf>
- Merit System Rules: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/employment/hr/Documents/County%20of%20Santa%20Clara%20Ordinance%20Code.pdf>
- Bargaining Unit (Union) contracts: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/esa/labor/Pages/mou-moa.aspx>