

Policy Title	HUMAN SERVICES MERIT-BASED HIRING SYSTEM STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
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BY DIRECTION OF: Dauphin County Board of Commissioners

Step 1 - Vacant Position:

In order to begin the hiring process there must be an open position available, either an existing vacancy or a newly created position. Positions are classified as part of the County's job creation process. If essential job functions of a position change substantially, the position is reviewed to ensure it is classified in the appropriate pay range.

Step 2 - Approval Process:

A department wishing to fill a vacancy must submit a Position Justification Form and a Staff Requisition Form to the Human Services Directors Office.

A department wishing to create a new position must submit a Salary Board Request Form, a Position Justification Form, and a Staff Requisition Form, along with a Job Description for the proposed position, to the Human Services Directors Office. If an equivalent position does not exist within the County, the Salary Classification Committee will convene to determine the appropriate pay range for the position. A representative of the department should be prepared to meet with the committee and explain the reasons this position is being requested and to answer any questions committee members may have regarding the position's essential job functions, minimum qualifications, proposed compensation, etc.

All vacancies and new positions must be approved by the state funding agency to ensure reimbursement for the position, and further, be approved by the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners or Salary Board, respectively, at their Workshop/Legislative Meetings. Salary Board consists of the three (3) County Commissioners and the County Controller; additionally, the President Judge, Public Defender, or a Row Officer has a right to vote on Salary Board Requests affecting their departments.

Step 3 - Posting of the Vacancy:

Following Salary Board approval to create a new position or Board of Commissioners approval to fill an existing position, recruitment of candidates to fill vacant positions will be initiated by posting the vacancy internally within the Human Services Departments or County-wide to all employees and the public. Posting of positions will be in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between Dauphin County and the Pennsylvania Social Services Union (PSSU).

The decision as to whether to post internally or County-wide externally is based on the position to be filled and the availability of candidates with the requisite skills among those promotable, transferable, and trainable within the Human Services Departments. Internal applicants will be given first consideration. Any preferred skills specific to the position, including the need for a bilingual employee with the ability to translate or transcribe, will be listed on the job posting in addition to the minimum education, training, and work experience requirements. Applications will be accepted during the posting period only.

Internal Postings: When recruiting internally within the Human Services Departments, a position will be posted on employee bulletin boards in all of the Human Services Departments. Only current County Human Services employees will be eligible to respond to this type of posting. Interested employees must complete a Transfer Application and submit it to the Human Services Director's Office (HSDO). A resume should be attached to the Transfer Application.

County-wide/Public Postings: When it becomes necessary to recruit externally to fill a position, a County-wide posting will be posted on the County's website and disseminated to all County employees as well as to resource agencies for minorities, older adults, disabled individuals and veterans, local educational institutions, and when applicable, the County Commissioners' Association of Pennsylvania's website. Job fairs and newspaper advertisements are other approaches for recruitment. County-wide postings are for a period of fourteen (14) calendar days.

Interested employees must complete a Transfer Application, attach their resume and submit both to the Department of Human Resources by the deadline dates indicated on the posting. Non-Dauphin County employees must complete a Dauphin County Application for Employment to be considered a candidate for a posted position.

Applicants may also visit the Department of Human Resources to review job postings on the public bulletin board and complete applications for posted positions. A separate application must be submitted for each posted position. A resume may supplement an application but cannot be substituted for an application. Acknowledgement cards are mailed to all applicants, confirming receipt of applications.

Step 4 - Screening of Candidates:

The applications will be submitted to the Human Services Director's Office (HSDO) for screening to ensure the candidates meet the minimum education and training requirements (METs) for the vacant positions. Each MET is designed to meet the standards established by the appropriate state funding agency. Transcripts will be requested and reviewed to confirm education based upon the minimum requirements of the position. Applicants who do not meet the METs will not be considered nor advance through the selection process.

The department may use certain preferred skills to reduce the number of candidates considered for interview. These skills must be identified on the job posting for the particular vacancy. All candidates that meet the minimum qualifications and preferred skills if applicable will be interviewed. Any preferred skills that have been included in the job posting will be filtered after the METs.

Once these screenings have been completed, all remaining qualified applications will be forwarded to the requesting agencies to schedule interviews/assessments for the vacant positions.

The order of criteria to screen candidates responding to a job posting is as follows:

- A. The established minimum experience and training requirements for the job title listed in the job posting.
- B. Any identified preferred skills that have been included in the job posting.
- C. All candidates that pass the first two (2) filters will then proceed into one (1) of two (2) categories based on the job title as outlined in Step 5.
 1. Assessment First
 - a. Management Readiness Profile (MRP) and Management Success Profile (MSP) "non-recommended" candidates will not be included in the candidate pool for interviews.
 - b. All candidates that are "recommended" consequent to the MRP or MSP will be granted an interview for the vacant position.
 - c. All candidates that receive a score on the fiscal assessment will be granted an interview.

- d. The “recommended” candidates and all fiscal candidates will be given a score in the assessment column of the Interview/Assessment Score Sheet for the assessment and interview, and the top combined total of the assessment and interview score will determine which candidate is extended a conditional offer of employment.
2. Interview First
 - a. Interviews will be rated by the interview panel and given a composite score.
 - b. Assessments will be given immediately after the interviews for writing sample assessments only. Typing of skill check assessments will be scheduled in a time efficient manner by the HSDO.
 - c. Candidates will be given a score in the assessment score column of the Interview/Assessment Score Sheet for the assessment and interview, and the top combined total of the assessment and interview score will determine which candidate is extended a conditional offer of employment.

Step 5 - Interviews and Assessments:

Applicants within the Clerical, Social Support, Caseworker, Aging Care Manager, Treatment and Prevention Specialist and Program Specialist categories will be interviewed first followed by a position appropriate assessment.

Applicants within the Fiscal, Entry level Supervisor, and advanced Management job titles will be assessed first and then interviewed.

The Director of Human Services will follow the Commissioners’ guidance regarding the selection process for department heads in accordance with the state action plans for recruitment of key positions.

Additional Notes on Interview/Assessments:

The following job categories will entail interviews followed by assessments:

Clerical Staff: Assessments will consist of a timed typing test, the Office Skills Assessment Battery (OSAB) and an interview.

Social Support Staff: Process includes a department-specific writing sample provided by the candidate immediately following the interview. The writing sample will address written communications and reasoning skills. A Skill Check assessment may be selected in addition to the writing sample.

Caseworkers/Care Managers/Treatment and Prevention Specialists/Program Specialists: Process includes the interview, along with a department-specific writing sample provided by the candidate immediately following the interview. The writing sample will address written communications and reasoning skills. The scenario provided will be the same for the applicants in each specific pool.

The following job categories will entail assessments followed by interviews:

Fiscal Staff: Applicants will be assessed using an approved testing tool. Modules include: Accounting-Business Documents; Accounting-Cost Accounting; Accounting-Credits and Debits; Accounting-Math Skills; Accounting-Terminology; Accounting-Accountant; Accounting-Accounts Receivable; Accounting-Advanced Accounting and Accounting-Bookkeeper.

Entry Level Supervisors: Applicants will be assessed first using an approved testing tool (MRP). Only candidates that are “recommended” by this skills assessment will proceed in the interview process. The candidate with the highest rating score on the Interview/Assessment Score Sheet will be awarded the position. Second level interviews will occur if there is a “tie” in the ratings and no preference has been identified. The second level interview panel may consist of the three (3) panel members that initially interviewed the candidates or a new three-member panel. Once a panel is selected to conduct second level interviews, that panel will conduct all of the second level interviews for that position. New scoring sheets and questions will be necessary for second level interviews.

Program Specialist 2s/Managers/Deputies: Applicants will be assessed first using an approved testing tool (MSP). Only candidates that are “recommended” by this skills assessment will proceed in the interview process. Second level interviews may be required for upper management positions (managers/deputies). The second level interview panel may consist of the three (3) panel members that initially interviewed the candidates or a new three-member panel. Once a panel is selected to conduct second level interviews, that panel will conduct all of the second level interviews for that position. New scoring sheets and questions will be needed for second level interviews.

Department Heads: Director of Human Services will follow Commissioners’ guidance regarding the selection process in accordance with the state action plans for recruitment of key positions.

A minimum three-member panel will be utilized for the interviews. This three-member panel will serve as the panel for all of the interviews for which the particular posting applies. The questions asked in the interviews will be uniform for each candidate for the particular vacant position. The panel will use the Rating Score Sheets developed by the Department of Human Resources and the HSDO for the particular position title unless otherwise approved, in advance, for a particular position. Job descriptions will be provided to candidates for review at the beginning of the interviews.

The panel will use the Interview Rating Form developed by the Department of Human Resources and the HSDO. The Interview Rating Form will be based on competencies needed for the position in tandem with the duties outlined in the job description. Each competency category is given a weighted number of points prior to the interview. The scores of each candidate will be totaled and the totals tallied on the Interview/Assessment Score Sheet. The total score will be weighted as 75% from the interview scores, and 25% for the assessment results. Individual panel members will score each candidate on a scale from 1 to 100 based on the candidate's answers during the interview process. The panel members' scores will be added together for each candidate and will be multiplied by 75%, as will the total possible points, based on the number of individuals on the interview panel multiplied by 100 points. Next the number of points earned on the assessment(s) will be totaled if there is more than one (1) assessment completed and that total will be multiplied by 25%. The two (2) numbers will be added together to obtain the final and total score.

The assessments that have a recommend/not recommend final determination will be assigned points to reflect the averaged level of percentile that the candidate achieved on a "recommended" assessment result as detailed below:

- A 30 - 50 average total percentile score will be awarded 25 points.
- A 51 - 65 average total percentile score will be awarded 50 points.
- A 66 - 80 average total percentile score will be awarded 75 points.
- A 81 - 100 average total percentile score will be awarded 100 points.
- "Not recommended" candidates will not continue through the process.

All applicants will be assessed using the same tools for consistency and fairness in rating candidates. Assessments within each category will be periodically reviewed. Dauphin County will cover the cost of the assessments.

Step 6 - Candidate Selection:

The candidate with the highest total score will be offered the position first, followed by the next highest scoring candidate if the first candidate declines the extended employment offer. Multiple candidates may be hired for vacancies in the same job title, being extended offers in order of highest to lowest composite scores.

Consideration must be given in the following instances:

- Veteran's Preference – Non-applicable to promotional actions. Veteran's Preference is applicable to all HSDO departments. If a candidate self-identifies as a veteran of the United States Armed Forces and all other things are equal in assessing and interview scores, the position must be offered to the veteran. The HSDO will be responsible for verification of veteran's status.

- Spousal Preference – Non-applicable to promotional actions. Spousal Preference is applicable to all HSDO departments. If a candidate self-identifies as a widow or widower of a deceased veteran or the spouse of a fully (100%) disabled veteran and all other things are equal in assessing and interview scores, the position must be offered to the spousal preferred candidate. The HSDO will be responsible for verification of spousal status.
- Aging Preference – Non-applicable to promotional actions. Aging Preference is only applicable to the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). If a candidate self-identifies as being sixty (60) years of age or older and all other things are equal in assessing and interview scores, the position must be offered to the age preferred candidate. The HSDO will be responsible for verification of age.
- Dauphin County Preference – Non-applicable to promotional actions. Dauphin County Preference is applicable to all HSDO departments. If a candidate is a Dauphin County resident and all other things are equal in assessing and interview scores, the position must be offered to the Dauphin County resident. The HSDO will be responsible for verification of County residence.

If there is a tie of the top total score on the Interview/Assessment Score Sheet, the following should then be granted weight in the following order for the tie-breaker:

1. Candidate qualifies for a Veteran's Preference or Age Preference (for AAA positions only).
2. Candidate qualifies for a Spousal Preference.
3. Candidate qualifies for a Dauphin County Preference.

Following the interviews and assessments, the department representatives will send copies of the Interview Rating Forms, Interview/Assessment Score Sheets, and the writing sample results to the HSDO if applicable.

Once approval is given by the HSDO to extend a conditional offer to a candidate contingent upon Commissioner approval, the New Employee Cover Sheets for new hires or Personnel Action Forms for transfers, promotions and demotions should be submitted to the HSDO. The HSDO will record information from the documentation to be used in a report to the state oversight agency for that particular department. The documents submitted will be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources for inclusion in the Personnel Packet to be presented at the next Workshop and Legislative meetings for Commissioners' approval. Once Commissioners' approval has been granted at the Legislative meeting, the department representative will contact the candidates to confirm his/her selection, pay rates and start dates.

External candidates who successfully complete the interview and assessment process, but are not selected, will be mailed a letter by the department and will be encouraged to re-apply to future postings.

External candidates who complete the assessment and are “not recommended” by the results will be mailed a letter by the HSDO notifying them of this outcome. Scores from the assessment will be kept on file with the HSDO. Candidates must wait six (6) months before being eligible to re-take the assessment for the same job title.

Internal candidates who successfully complete the interview and assessment process, but are not selected will be mailed a letter by the department and will be encouraged to reapply to future postings. Additionally, the candidate will be given the opportunity to schedule a meeting with a member of the interview panel to discuss the results and areas for improvement. Scores from the assessments will be kept on file with the HSDO. Candidates are encouraged to apply for future postings, but must wait six (6) months before being eligible to re-take the assessment for the same job title.

When previously assessed and recommended candidates apply for positions within the same job title, copies of their current assessments will be provided to the respective Human Services departments’ directors. Interviews must be performed each time a new position opens, due to changes in the interview panel from position to position.

Departments can use the results from a previous hiring process to consider a candidate, but must meet the following criteria:

1. The job description is the same as the previous vacancy.
2. The interview panel must be the same as the previous vacancy’s panel.
3. The candidate must submit a new application for employment for each adjusted posting.
4. The candidate has not received a “not recommended” on the MRP or the MSP.
5. Consideration must be within ninety (90) days of the original posting to hire the next candidate on an established list.

Assessment results are valid for two (2) years from the date of the assessment and will be retained by the HSDO. Candidates who were not recommended based on the assessments may not apply for the same job title until after a six (6) month period has elapsed. The company that administers the assessments will retain the assessments for seven (7) years. All other results from the process will be retained by the HSDO for a period of five (5) years from the date of assessment in the event that a hiring decision is reviewed or challenged.

Candidates that are selected will be made conditional job offers by the department directors. When communicating to prospective employees, directors must indicate that prior to a formal offers begin made, the prospective employees must first pass a background check and other essential requirements for that position to include reference, educational, and criminal background. These checks must be conducted on every selected candidate. In addition, the hires must be approved by the Commissioners at a Commissioners' Meeting.

New employees will be scheduled to attend New Employee Orientation on the first day of County employment. Department specific training will be provided by each Human Services department in accordance with their regulations.

Job descriptions will be provided to new employees upon hire and will be made available to employees annually with the Employee Performance Reviews and throughout employment by request.