

Initial Draft Response to the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Second Mid-term Report

Reason for the Report

It was brought to the attention of the Grand Jury by current and former employees that turnover and instability within all levels of the Human Resources Department has impacted the Department's ability to perform required and essential functions.

The Grand Jury responded to these concerns by conducting a review of the Human Resources Department. Upon completion of the initial Grand Jury inquiry it was apparent that there are and have been issues that affect County Departmental interactions and consistency of defined services.

Scope of Investigation

People Interviewed:

- El Dorado County Chief Administrative Officer
- El Dorado County Auditor/Controller
- El Dorado County Deputy Director Development Services for Administration
- El Dorado County Under Sheriff
- El Dorado County Supervisor District II
- El Dorado County Counsel
- El Dorado Deputy County Counsel
- El Dorado County District Attorney Legal Secretary, Social Services Supervisor
- El Dorado County Chief Assistant, County Counsel
- El Dorado County Acting Labor Relations Manager
- El Dorado County Director of Department of Transportation
- El Dorado County Former Deputy Director Human Resources
- El Dorado County Former Analyst, Human Resources (2)
- Public Employees Union Local #1, Executive Director

Documents Reviewed:

- *El Dorado County Charter*
- *County of El Dorado Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation and Report and Complaint Procedure*
- *The County of El Dorado Invites You To Apply For The Position of Director of Human Resources*
- *Job Class Title, Director of Human Resources*
- *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book*
- *County of El Dorado Fiscal Year 2006/2007 Budget & Work Plan*

Background

In keeping with the Grand Jury's directive, the initial inquiry involved an overview of the Human Resources Department and its inter-relationship with other County departments. The purpose of this inquiry was to obtain an awareness of the Department's services and to develop an understanding of its operations. The El Dorado County Charter identifies the Board of Supervisors as ultimately responsible for setting Human Resources policy and personnel rules.

During this investigation a significant number of issues are identified and substantiated by multiple testimonies. The most obvious issues include:

- The Department is undervalued by the Board of Supervisors.
- The Department is dysfunctional due to turnover and inconsistent management.
- The Department turnovers and vacancies result in loss of experienced and knowledgeable employees and reduce the level of service to County departments.
- The lack of proactive staff management in employee performance and training results in early dismissals and unnecessary costly recruiting throughout the County departments.

Facts, Findings & Recommendations:

1F. Facts:

- Some County departments do not utilize or engage the Human Resources Department when conducting personnel related activities.
- The Board of Supervisors does not demonstrate a consistent policy related to County departments handling of personnel matters that circumvent the Human Resources Department.

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1F. Finding:

These issues have the potential for increasing liability in the event of mishandling of personnel related issues. Further, this inconsistency demeans and lessens the stature of the Human Resources Department.

Response

The respondent agrees with the finding.

1R. Recommendations:

- The Board of Supervisors must review, update, reiterate and enforce policy for consistency regarding the Human Resources Department's role and responsibilities.
- The Board of Supervisors must effectively communicate their directives with regard to the working relationship between other County departments and the Human Resources Department.
- The Board of Supervisors through the Chief Administrative Officer must enforce the Departmental interface and relationships that meet their stated policy.

Response:

The recommendation has been implemented. The Board of Supervisors, through the introduction of the new Human Resources Director to all Department Heads has demonstrated its' support for the position and the Human Resources Department. The Board of Supervisors is committed to continue to show support and foster an appropriate relationship between Human Resources and other departments. The Chief Administrative Officer has expressed her support for the Human Resources Department and will continue to insist upon an effective interface between Human Resources and all other departments.

2F. Facts:

- There is excessive turnover in the Human Resources Department directorship since 2003.
- While this investigation looked primarily into issues within the Human Resources Department, it is also notable that there is an unusually high level of turnover at the executive level within other County departments. This negatively impacts the ability of County departments to effectively perform essential functions.

2F. Finding:

- Eight (8) Human Resources Directors staffed this position in the last three and a half (3 ½) years.
 - July, 2003 Human Resources Department Director retires
 - July, 2003 to February, 2004 Deputy County Counsel, Acting Human Resources Director
 - February, 2004 to November, 2004 Chief Administrative Officer, Acting Human Resources Director
 - November, 2004 to August, 2005 Human Resources Director
 - August, 2005 to November, 2005 contract Human Resources Director
 - November, 2005 to June, 2006 Human Resources Director
 - June, 2006 to January, 2007 Chief Administrative Officer, Acting Human Resources Director
 - January, 2007 Human Resources Director

Response:

The respondent agrees with the finding.

2F. Recommendations:

- The Board of Supervisors must set goals and objectives in collaboration with the Director regarding implementation of a Human Resources Department strategic plan.
- The Board of Supervisors must be supportive and allow the Director to make necessary changes to implement the Human Resources strategic plan.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. On March 27, 2007 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Strategic Plan Framework for FY 2007-08 and FY 2008-09. The FY 2007-08 Budget will utilize the goals and objectives outlined in the Framework.

During the Budget process for FY2007/08 the Human Resources Department, in collaboration with the Chief Administrative Office, will outline departmental priorities in conjunction with the Strategic Plan Framework goals and objectives. The Human Resource Department has been intimately involved in the development of these goals and objectives which provide a crucial part of the overall strategic plan for the Department and the County. Specifically, the Strategic Plan will identify organizational development, effective services and customer satisfaction among other issues as priorities.

The Human Resources Departments expects to deliver measurable performance in the areas of faster employee recruitment, improved employee relations and increased satisfaction to the public and other County departments that utilize Human Resources' services. The Board of Supervisors has voiced its support for this approach and all parties are determined to make it successful. The 2007-08 budget work plan including the Human Resources strategic initiatives will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in June, 2007.

3F. Facts:

- The *County of El Dorado Fiscal Year 2006/2007 Budget & Work Plan* appropriates \$1,272,646 and eighteen (18) full time equivalent positions to the Human Resources Department.
- Budget and staffing are inadequate; the Human Resources Department cannot satisfactorily perform its role and responsibilities.
- Human Resources employee turnover since June, 2003 include:

- Ten (10) employees resigned for employment elsewhere
- Six (6) employees accepted re-assignment in El Dorado County
- Five (5) employees retired or left County employment.
- El Dorado County labor bargaining units have increased from five (5) to thirteen (13) over the past decade.

3F. Findings:

- Inadequate staffing and funding within the Human Resources Department results in inadequate training and recruiting.
- Excessive employee turnover and unfilled positions severely impacts the Human Resources Department's ability to provide comprehensive and timely services to other County departments.

Response:

The respondent disagrees partially with the finding.

Inadequate training and recruiting is occurring, however, this is principally a function of the unfilled positions in Human Resources. It would appear to be premature to conclude that funding and staffing are inadequate until the Human Resources Department is fully staffed and its performance can be properly evaluated. A fully staffed Human Resources Department should be able to meet the comprehensive needs of other County departments in a timely manner.

3R. Recommendations:

- Implement a competitive and diligent recruitment program that fills County vacancies with qualified employees on a timely basis.
- The Human Resources Department must provide State and Federal mandated Human Resources training in addition to supervisory training to El Dorado County employees.
- The Human Resources Department must maintain accurate and current employee training records.
- Adjust the level of authorized positions in the Human Resources Department from the current level to a level that supports the organizational workload as identified in the *County of El Dorado Fiscal Year 2006/2007 Budget & Work Plan*. These functions are:
 - Discipline, EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity), Discrimination Complaints
 - Recruitment and Testing
 - Training and Orientation
 - Labor Relations
 - County Personnel Operations, Support

- Classification/Salary Administration
- Risk Management
- The Board of Supervisors must provide the necessary adjustment in the budget to allow the Human Resources management to make the needed changes.

Response:

The recommendation requires further analysis.

Within the past eight weeks, steps have been taken to streamline the recruitment process to increase efficiency. Specifically, the on-line application process is being refined to be more user friendly. Cumbersome testing limitations have been relaxed. Greater consistency in the evaluation of qualifications is being pursued. One Senior Personnel Analyst and one Principal Personnel Analyst vacancy has been filled. Interviews to fill the one remaining Personnel Analyst I/II position are expected to be completed with an offer of employment extended by April 20, 2007. All of these changes should make the process more swift and consistent. Training and appropriate training records are being reviewed. The comprehensive training of supervisors is under way and will be emphasizing a customer service component. The scope of responsibilities of the Human Resources Department is broad; however, the existing staffing and organizational model should be given the opportunity to perform with a full staff. The Human Resources Director will bring a report to the Board of Supervisors in August, 2007 which evaluates recruitment, training, and records management.

4F. Fact:

- The *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book* has not been updated.

4F. Finding:

- The *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book* is outdated and does not reflect current applicable laws and Human Resources practices.

Response:

The Respondent agrees with the finding.

4R. Recommendation:

- The *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book* must be reviewed and updated as a minimum on an annual basis, to reflect changes in applicable laws and Human Resources practices.

Response:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book* currently consists of one ordinance with rules of procedure, three resolutions dating back to 1984 and nine separate policies. These documents are not well integrated or codified. For Fiscal Year 2007/08 the Human Resources Department has committed itself to revising the Civil Service Commission Rules of Procedure and the Drug and Alcohol Policy. The Department is also developing new policies regarding tuition re-imbusement, Exempt Employee Time Reporting Policy and Exempt Employee On Call Policy. The complete revision of the *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book* is a long term goal that will be realized through a consistent annual approach. Included in the report to the Board of Supervisors outlined in the response to Recommendation 3R, the Human Resources Director will also report on the status of revisions to the *El Dorado County Personnel Management Book*.