
CIVILIAN SELECTION PROCESS

EE.1 PURPOSE

This SEAM Article establishes the policy and procedures that govern the Cook County Sheriff's Office employment action and are a reiteration of standing practice, which prevents any political influence on this process.

This Article does not apply to the recruitment and selection of sworn hires or direct appointment hires. Refer to SEAM Article A for sworn hires.

Direct appointment hires are exempt from SEAM Processes. Refer to SEAM Article Z for direct appointment hiring processes.

EE.2 POLICY

- (a) The Department of Human Resources (HR) will guide the hiring process and assure that recruitment seeks qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a workforce reflective of the population served by the Cook County Sheriff's Office. Selection and advancement will be determined solely on the basis of ability, qualifications, knowledge, and skills, after a fair and competitive process which assures that all qualified applicants receive equal opportunity for consideration.
- (b) The respective Executive Office Chief and/or department head responsible for the decisions involved in this Article's process shall complete and sign an Employment Action Form that includes No Political Consideration Certification (NPCC) language. If other members of management assisted them in the review and selection of employees for this employment action, the respective Executive Office Chief and/or department head must order and obtain NPCCs from any such member.
- (c) This Article supersedes all existing guidelines regarding civilian hiring.

EE.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

EE.3.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In conjunction with HR, requesting department heads, supervisors, and/or designated individuals are charged with making hiring decisions for their respective departments, divisions and/or units consistent with the policies and procedures set forth in this Article.

Any former Sheriff's Office employee who was either terminated or was not in good standing upon leaving the Sheriff's Office and applies for re-employment for a civilian position, such application shall be reviewed and reconsidered on a case-by-case basis.

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EE.3.2 HR RESPONSIBILITIES

HR staff has the responsibility of ensuring that all recruitment and selection practices are applied equitably and consistently by:

- (a) Creating job descriptions that accurately identify qualifications and essential job functions for all requested positions;
- (b) Confirming that approval has been secured by the hiring department on the Employment Action Form;
- (c) Assuring that all recruitment materials, advertisements, media, notices, job postings, and communications to recruitment sources, applicants, department heads, and stakeholders are consistent with the hiring decisions set forth in the policies and procedures in this SEAM Article;
- (d) Providing training for department heads and individuals involved in the hiring process, including SEAM interview training, monitoring compliance, and/or reporting non-compliance, in conjunction with the Director of Compliance;
- (e) Serving as the contact point for all applicants for employment;
- (f) Providing job postings, interview panel information, and interview questions to the Director of Compliance;
- (g) Maintaining recruitment and selection data;
- (h) Providing data and analysis to executive leadership of the Sheriff's Office;
- (i) On-boarding the hired employee; and
- (j) Notifying the requesting department of the applicant selection.

EE.3.3 DIRECTOR OF COMPLIANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Compliance is responsible for:

- (a) Monitoring the employment practices to ensure that all recruitment and selection are consistent with the policies and procedures set forth in this SEAM Article;
- (b) Identifying conflicts of interest and implementing remedies;
- (c) Conducting periodic and random audits;
- (d) Making recommendations for quality and process improvements; and
- (e) Performing duties as outlined in SEAM Articles.

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EE.4 RECRUITING PROCEDURES

EE.4.1 CIVILIAN RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

- (a) Prior to posting for a position, the Executive Director of HR and the Director of Talent shall assess the hiring needs of the requesting department. Such assessment may include, but is not limited to:
 - 1. A job analysis for the position being sought and review of current positions to determine whether the position duties can or should be performed by existing staff;
 - 2. Reviewing or creating a job description that accurately details the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed, the essential job functions, responsibilities, the minimum and preferred qualifications, and appropriate compensation based on current employees in the same or similar titles/roles/positions; and
 - 3. The availability of open positions and/or funding in the budget to accommodate the hire.
- (b) The requesting department head will reach out to the Budget Office regarding the availability of open positions and/or funding in the budget to accommodate the hire(s) and complete the Employment Action Form, ensure all required signatures are received, and forward the completed form to the Executive Director of HR.
- (c) The Executive Director of HR shall forward the completed Employment Action Form to the Budget Office for approval.
- (d) Pipeline Recruitment - The Executive Director of HR may authorize the posting of limited positions (e.g., difficult to fill, time-sensitive) in anticipation of available funding or vacancies in order to facilitate the seamless replacement of departing employees, create eligibility lists for key positions, or for other reasons deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Sheriff's Office.
- (e) The Executive Director of HR shall meet with the requesting department head to finalize:
 - 1. Minimum and preferred qualifications;
 - 2. Screening criteria, such as tests or qualifying questions appropriately related to the position; and
 - 3. Sourcing strategies including whether to post externally, recruitment sites to utilize, distribution to schools, professional organizations, social media sites, and other recruitment methods.
- (f) The Executive Director of HR shall create a Notice of Job Opportunity which will be approved by the Director of Compliance and the requesting department head before posting. The notice will be sent to all Sheriff's Office employees via email and will be posted online with a link for applicants to access an application for employment. (e.g.,

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Sheriff's Office public website for internal and external applicants, SheriffNet for internal applicants only). The posting should include the following:

1. Job title;
 2. Job code;
 3. Salary grade;
 4. Position detail (e.g., civilian, professional, technical, specialized, internal/external);
 5. FLSA status;
 6. Probation period;
 7. Job description;
 8. Minimum qualifications and preferred qualifications, if any;
 9. Appropriate salary range;
 10. Required licenses and certifications;
 11. List of additional documents required by the applicant;
 12. Description of any tests that will be administered;
 13. Union name and bargaining unit, if applicable;
 14. Directions on how and where to apply;
 15. Time period during which applications will be accepted;
 16. Whether the posting is open to internal applicants only;
 17. Reference to SEAM Article EE;
 18. Non-discrimination statement; and
 19. NPCC statement.
- (g) Applicants, unless requesting an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, are required to complete the application process through the Sheriff's Office online recruitment system.
1. Applicants must complete all screening questions, complete the application in its

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entirety, sign, certify, and include all requested documents in order to be considered for the posted position.

2. All positions, both internal and external, will be posted for a period of at least two weeks. The Director of Compliance can agree to a shorter posting period if an operational need is shown.
- (h) In the event that the requesting department head and Executive Director of HR deem the applicant pool to be unsubstantial after the initial two-week posting period, the job posting, screening questions, or other aspects of the posting may be amended and reposted for an additional period of time. Any extended posting will not disqualify qualified applicants who applied during the initial posting period. Pipeline recruiting is permissible.

EE.4.2 PRE-INTERVIEW SCREENING

- (a) After the posting closes, the Executive Director of HR will screen all applications to determine which are qualified and create the Screening Spreadsheet/Eligibility List. The list will be based on the following criteria:
1. Whether the application was complete and submitted in a timely manner;
 2. Whether the application indicates the applicant possesses all the minimum qualifications and the number of preferred qualifications, if applicable stated in the Notice of Job Opportunity;
 3. Whether all requested documentation has been provided, and;
 4. Whether the applicant is internal.
- (b) An internal applicant may be disqualified based on discipline if:
1. The applicant has received discipline pursuant to Sheriff's Office policies/procedures or an applicable collective bargaining agreement, or otherwise resulting in suspensions of a total of four or more days for one or multiple infractions within the previous 18 months from the posting closure date, discipline resulting in a demotion or recommendation for demotion, suspension or termination;
 2. The applicant has been found to be untruthful by OPR, a court of law, or an administrative body.
- (c) The applicant will be considered "not qualified" if they have incurred two or more of any of the following unpaid/unauthorized activities within the 24-month period under review:
1. No sick time;
 2. Absent late call;

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3. Absent no call;
 4. No vacation time;
 5. No personal time;
 6. No compensatory time;
 7. No holiday time;
 8. Unauthorized Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) time;
 9. Unauthorized Injured on duty (IOD) time.
- (d) The applicant will be considered “not qualified” if they have incurred seven or more instances of tardiness/docked time within the 24-month review period.
- (e) Applicants who fail to meet the minimum attendance or discipline standard shall be marked, “not qualified” on the Applicant List along with a description. An updated copy of the Applicant List will be forwarded to the Director of Compliance and the Executive Director of HR.
- (f) Applicants who fail to meet the minimum attendance or discipline standard shall be marked “not qualified” on the Applicant List and receive a disqualification letter. In the event the applicant meets the minimum requirements but gets disqualified due to an attendance violation or discipline, the applicant may appeal the disqualification by contacting the Director of Compliance in writing and submitting any supporting documentation within seven calendar days of the date specified on their disqualification letter. Any reversal of the applicant status must be supported by documentation.
1. The Director of Compliance shall contact Payroll, HR, the Legal Department and/or OPR as soon as practicable. The final determination should be made as soon as practicable.
 2. Appeals must be based on an error, not attributable to the applicant, or an error that has already been corrected pursuant to Sheriff's Office policy.
 3. If the applicant is deemed “qualified” after the appeal, the Director of Compliance will submit their findings in writing to the applicant and the Executive Director of HR via email.
- (g) Applicants will be screened in order to narrow the field when the response to the posting is substantial or to differentiate between applicants who are better suited for a position. The Executive Director of HR may disqualify applicants who do not meet a pre-determined number of the preferred qualifications as outlined in the job posting. When

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screening applicants, individuals who meet all minimum and all preferred qualifications will be selected first for interviews. Applicants will continue to be screened based on the number of qualifications they possess for the position; the most qualified candidates will be selected to interview. The Executive Director of HR may also conduct phone or electronic screening using an identical standard set of questions to narrow the applicant pool. Subsequent phone or electronic screening may occur if, after consulting with the requesting department head, additional identical clarifying questions are necessary to further determine the best suited applicants for in-person interviews.

- (h) A final interview list will be created by the Executive Director of HR and provided to the requesting department head for informational purposes. A notice will be sent, via electronic means (i.e., Taleo) to all applicants deemed “not qualified” for the position.

EE.4.3 IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

The Executive Director of HR is the main point of contact for all applicants and will communicate all information to the applicant regarding the interview, additional requirements, and next steps.

- (a) The Executive Director of HR will coordinate in-person interviews for a minimum of seven applicants starting with the best suited applicants. If fewer than seven applicants, meet the minimum qualifications, HR will coordinate in-person interviews with all that meet the minimum qualifications.
- (b) The Executive Director of HR in conjunction with the requesting department head shall complete a list of at least 10 interview questions that will establish the following:
 - 1. Suitability for the position;
 - 2. Willingness and ability to do the job;
 - 3. Availability for work hours and willingness to work at the job location;
 - 4. Prior job expertise, experience, and performance;
 - 5. Knowledge and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the position; and
 - 6. The extent to which the applicant matches the relevant qualifications for the position.
- (c) Interviews will be conducted as follows:
 - 1. All interviews shall be conducted by a panel(s) of three members. Two of those members must be from the requesting department and the third member of the panel must be from HR.
 - 2. The panel members must be of a higher level than the applicants being interviewed.

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3. No person may participate in or observe an interview without first receiving SEAM interview training.
 4. The requesting department head will work with the Executive Director of HR to create interview panels. The number of panels convened shall be determined by the number of applicants with the objective of ensuring that all applicants are interviewed in a timely fashion.
 5. The Director of Compliance will receive the approved list of panel members. The Director of Compliance may, at their discretion:
 - a. Selectively audit the panel members' understanding of the interview process and address knowledge gaps in advance of the applicant interview.
 - b. Disqualify a panel member and work with the Executive Director of HR to identify an alternate panelist.
- (d) At the completion of the interviews, all panelists who participated in the process may hold a selection meeting.
1. Applicants will be ranked either "highly recommended", "recommended" or "not recommended" based on their total interview score.
 2. Any applicant that receives at least one "not recommended" will be excluded from consideration.
 3. The panelists will discuss the qualifications of the applicants and reach consensus on ranking as first choice, second choice, third choice and so on and document the bases for their decisions.
 4. Each panel member must include a thorough explanation when an applicant is rated as "not recommended".
- (e) The authorized HR representative shall make a conditional offer of employment pending the successful completion of required background checks, employment verification, and a pre-employment drug test.
1. If the applicant is not cleared for employment or if the applicant declines the position, an offer is made to the second qualified applicant determined in the selection meeting.
 2. If the second qualified applicant is not cleared for employment or if the second qualified applicant declines the position, HR may make a conditional offer of employment to the next qualified applicant. If there is no other remaining qualified applicant, HR will begin the hiring process again.
- (f) Once the applicant has accepted the position and cleared all pre-employment tests and background checks, the Executive Director of HR shall send a notice of position filled to

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all qualified applicants.

1. For internal-only positions filled under this section: In the event the position becomes vacant within one year from the start date of the selected applicant, the Department Head may choose to offer the position to the next qualified applicant determined in the original selection meeting. Alternatively, they may seek to repost the position.

EE.4.4 PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, OR SPECIALIZED POSITIONS

The positions outlined in this subsection are exempt from the guidelines in the Pre-Interview Screening and In-Person Interview subsections.

For positions that involve a high degree of technical expertise, professional degrees and/or certifications, specialized knowledge and skill sets, education, or experience within a relevant field, or unique work/life experiences (e.g., investigative, legal, legislative, research, and statistical positions), the Director of Compliance, upon request by the requesting department head and/or HR, and after review of the job description and job posting, will designate the position as either professional, specialized, or technical, depending on the nature of the position. Once the Director of Compliance determines the designation, HR will add the position to the appropriate list. Political reasons and factors cannot be considered for any employment action relating to a professional, technical, or specialized position.

Due to the challenge of recruiting, hiring, promotion, and retaining high level/skilled talent, applicants may be exempt from the formal posting, screening, and panel interview process at the Sheriff's Office. In conjunction with the HR representative, the Director of Talent and Employment Actions will have the ability to use private sector best practices to screen, interview, and extend conditional offers of employment to applicants at job fairs, career fairs, and outside sourcing channels. The Executive Director of HR shall ensure the requirements outlined in the designations are met prior to any offers being made.

For purposes of this subsection, the Director of Compliance, in coordination with HR, shall designate positions as follows:

- (a) Professional designation - for positions that require an advanced degree beyond a bachelor's degree from a graduate or professional school and/or licensure from an authorized agency.
- (b) Specialized designation - for positions requiring specialized knowledge within the relevant field (but not necessarily advanced degrees from graduate or professional schools), or specialized and unique work/life experience(s).
- (c) Technical designation - for positions that require experience and a technical degree or training, such as with information technology (IT) and computer or software systems.

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EE.4.5 POSTING AND SCREENING OF PROFESSIONAL, SPECIALIZED, OR TECHNICAL POSITIONS

- (a) After the posting closes, the Executive Director of HR will screen all applications to determine which are qualified and create the Screening Spreadsheet/Eligibility List. The list will be based on the following criteria:
 - 1. Whether the application was complete and submitted in a timely manner;
 - 2. Whether the application indicates the applicant possesses all the minimum qualifications and the number of preferred qualifications, if applicable stated in the Notice of Job Opportunity;
 - 3. Whether all requested documentation has been provided, and;
 - 4. Whether the applicant is internal.
- (b) An internal applicant may be disqualified based on discipline if:
 - 1. The applicant has received discipline pursuant to Sheriff's Office policies/procedures or an applicable collective bargaining agreement, or otherwise resulting in suspensions of a total of four or more days for one or multiple infractions within the previous 18 months from the posting closure date, discipline resulting in a demotion or recommendation for demotion, suspension or termination;
 - 2. The applicant has been found to be untruthful by OPR, a court of law, or an administrative body.
- (c) The applicant will be considered "not qualified" if they have incurred two or more of any of the following unpaid/unauthorized activities within the 24-month period under review:
 - 1. No sick time;
 - 2. Absent late call;
 - 3. Absent no call;
 - 4. No vacation time;
 - 5. No personal time;
 - 6. No compensatory time;
 - 7. No holiday time;
 - 8. Unauthorized Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) time;

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9. Unauthorized Injured on duty (IOD) time.
- (d) The applicant will be considered “not qualified” if they have incurred seven or more instances of tardiness/docked time within the 24-month review period.
 - (e) Applicants who fail to meet the minimum attendance or discipline standard shall be marked, “not qualified” on the Applicant List along with a description. An updated copy of the Applicant List will be forwarded to the Director of Compliance and the Executive Director of HR.
 - (f) Applicants who fail to meet the minimum attendance or discipline standard shall be marked, “not qualified” on the Applicant List and receive a disqualification letter. In the event the applicant meets the minimum requirements but gets disqualified due to an attendance violation or discipline, the applicant may appeal the disqualification by contacting the Director of Compliance in writing and submitting any supporting documentation within seven calendar days of the date specified on their disqualification letter. Any reversal of the applicant status must be supported by documentation.
 - 1. The Director of Compliance shall contact Payroll, HR, the Legal Department and/or OPR as soon as practicable. The final determination should be made as soon as practicable.
 - 2. Appeals must be based on an error, not attributable to the applicant, or an error that has already been corrected pursuant to Sheriff's Office policy.
 - (g) If the applicant is deemed “qualified” after the appeal, the Director of Compliance will submit their findings in writing to the applicant and the Executive Director of HR via email.
 - (h) HR will screen for qualified applicants. The requesting department head may view all resumes not disqualified through the online recruitment system.
 - (i) The requesting department head will evaluate the applicants to be interviewed using criteria specific to the position.
 - (j) The Department Head will provide the final interview list, along with a memo describing the screening methods and the basis for selecting the applicants to interview will be provided to both the Executive Director of HR and the Director of Compliance.

EE.4.6 RECRUITING CONSULTANT PROCEDURES

Recruiting consultants may be retained for the purpose of recruiting professional, technical, and specialized positions on behalf of the Sheriff's Office.

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- (a) All contracts for recruitment consultants will contain a provision stating that political reasons and factors cannot be considered for any employment action and requires the reporting of political contacts.
- (b) All potential applicants identified by the recruiting consultant will be required to complete all applications, background checks, testing, and validation required confirming they meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

EE.4.7 ALTERNATIVE TECHNICAL POSTION HIRING PROCESS

For positions which have been designated Technical under the subsection entitled Professional, Technical, or Specialized Positions, the following process may be used by the respective department head when operational and/or business needs require an expedited hiring process:

- (a) The department head will submit an Employment Action Form requesting approval to utilize the expedited hiring process to the Director of Compliance and HR. The Director of Compliance will have 48 hours to approve or deny the request.
- (b) If approved, the department head will submit an Employment Action Form which includes NPCC language, affirming that no political considerations went into the selection and specifying the position being filled. A resume and any other supporting documentation needed to demonstrate that the person being selected meets the minimum qualifications listed in the approved position description shall be included.
- (c) HR will confirm that the individual meets the minimum qualifications for the position before processing the form.

EE.4.8 EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT HIRING PROCESS

The hiring process for executive assistants, who are assigned to a department head/division/unit head, may not require posting of job vacancies or conducting interviews. In this case, the respective department head must submit an Employment Action Form which includes NPCC language, affirming that no political considerations went into the selection, to the Executive Director of HR and notify the Director of Compliance.

- (a) HR will confirm that the individual meets the minimum qualifications for the position.
- (b) An executive assistant hired or transferred pursuant to the process described in this section may be suspended or terminated at the discretion of the respective department head or the Executive Office Chief.

EE.5 FINAL EVALUATION PROCESS

HR shall:

- (a) Request from the HR employment analyst copies of the entire criminal history for the selected applicants. Each will be evaluated individually and any selected applicant with a criminal conviction involving a crime that reflects negatively on the applicant's character, honesty or integrity will be deemed "not qualified".

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- (b) For internal applicants, conduct a final pending disciplinary check with OPR and Employee Discipline. In the event of a pending discipline case, the Executive Director of OPR shall make the decision whether or not to release the pending hold on the transfer or promotion and send a written notice to both the HR designee and the Director of Compliance.

EE.6 OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACTING THE HIRING PROCESS

Other limited circumstances impacting the applicability of the procedures outlined in this Article for hiring may include:

- (a) Settlements and awards required for compliance with any judgment, negotiated settlement, and complaint or arbitration award or as otherwise required by law.
- (b) Employment actions required by collective bargaining agreements including layoffs, recall, reemployment, promotion.
- (c) The use of new processes, systems, and/or technologies that more efficiently recruit, screen, and interview job applicants, but only if these procedures and/or technologies are transparent, adequately prevent political influence in the hiring process, and are presented to and approved by the Director of Compliance.