

EMPLOYEE RECRUITING, HIRING & ORIENTATION

FY24 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE AUDIT



**FY24 Comprehensive Performance Audit of Employee Recruitment, Hiring and Orientation
Human Resources Department**

Report Number 2024C-08



The mission of the Office of Operational Analysis is to provide quality internal audit services through independent and objective reviews and assessments of the activities, operations, financial systems, and internal accounting controls that support the Mayor and Commission's adopted goals and strategies; to make recommendations that will improve governance, risk management, control processes and value for money, all with the intent of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations for the benefit of Athens-Clarke County.

In accordance with Sec. 1-3-1 (b)(1) of the Athens-Clarke County Code of Ordinances, the Internal Auditor shall:

“Conduct reviews and analysis of operational and fiscal procedures and organizational structure and responsibilities as affects the efficiency and effectiveness of departments, offices, boards, activities, and agencies of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County.”

Audit Committee

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The Office of Operational Analysis (OA) conducted this audit with voluntary guidance and reference from the US Government Accountability Office publication Government Auditing Standards, also commonly referred to as “generally accepted government accounting standards” (GAGAS), or “Yellow Book.” Acknowledgement of these standards indicates our continued efforts to incorporate applicable, professional practices that are realistic and adaptive to the unique expectations of ACCGov and the community at large. The Comprehensive Performance Audit process developed by the Office of Operational Analysis is not a forensic audit; however, OA staff uses framework from the Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, known as the “Green Book,” as guidance for internal control and financial review. Green Book compliance helps provide reasonable assurance that evidence discovered is sufficient and appropriate to support findings and recommendations.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation

The Office of Operational Analysis is pleased to present the FY24 Comprehensive Performance Audit of Employee Recruitment, Hiring, and Orientation. This report highlights the important services provided to the organization in this realm by the Human Resources Department, and how they as a department approach such responsibility, in both objective(s) and operations. Focus was primarily directed toward the assessment of general program efficiency and effectiveness in broad application of practices, understanding that such a topic can easily be tailored to multiple, specific scenarios that would otherwise require additional evaluation beyond the focus of this audit.

This audit is intended to serve as a resource for ACCGov and the community. The report signifies the role of Operational Analysis to identify, research, analyze and promote the proficient methods in service delivery throughout a complex governmental system. The main purpose and scope are outlined in greater detail within the document, along with the most significant findings discovered during review. Items of lesser importance were presented and discussed with the department and county management during the audit, as appropriate, and may not have warranted inclusion in the report. All findings and recommendations, regardless of significance, have been brought to the attention of applicable staff and the Audit Committee prior to public release. The full list of formal findings, recommendations, and responses, along with informal points of interest or concern can be found on pages 50-57.

Overall, it is the professional opinion of the Office of Operational Analysis that Employee Recruitment, Hiring, and Orientation, as administered by the Human Resources Department is functioning at a level that accomplishes necessary tasks, though not necessarily from a position of sound confidence or standing, and could be enhanced by a variety of factors while within the current transitional environment. It is important to reiterate that the judgements made are not indicative of the department as a whole or the dedicated staff that comprise the many divisions of Human Resources. Rather, the suggestions provided herein are concentrated on the programmatic practices specifically related to maintaining our elite workforce as an organization. This is both a highly complex and challenging endeavor to say the least, which stretches beyond the Human Resources Department itself. It also includes the vast number of departments, offices, and courts it serves, as well as associated partners, amongst which all program practices are coordinated with every new hire.

Although specific concerns have been brought forth, many of the issues highlighted are not new or recent in prominence. They in fact have been evident as a continuous theme since unification of the city and county governments. Perhaps the impressions made upon Operational Analysis staff can be summarized best by an approach to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation that is more reactive than proactive, or one that is based in liability or risk aversion more so than aggressive tactics that attempt to go beyond traditional boundaries of practice. Thus, the following findings were found to be the most worthy of formal mention, though other minor points of concern can be found in applicable sections and the conclusion. Each of the stated issues below have related recommendations and potential mitigation strategies provided in greater detail at the end of this report.

1. Recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) software is not being used to its fullest capacity
2. Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of R/H/O practices
3. R/H/O practices of the HR Department are not data-driven
4. Lack of flexibility and agility in recruitment and hiring, especially regarding local workforce
5. Employee retention lacks defined goals
6. HR Department lacks cohesion and specificity of mission, goals, and strategy, particularly in emphasizing employee recruitment and retention

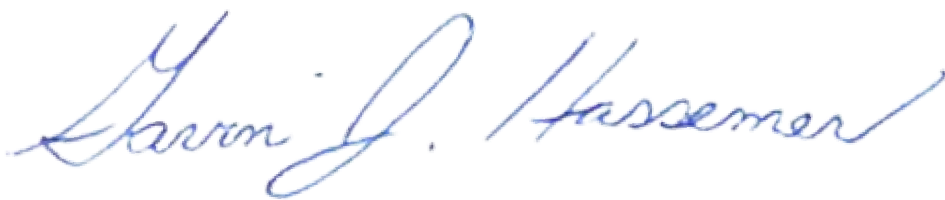
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation

Not unlike many of the ACCGov internal customers that Human Resources serves, the department itself is in a period of change, unimmune to the difficulties experienced in position vacancies, including the two ranking leadership posts. Even so, it became clear that those remaining employees are loyal, dedicated, and possess the skills needed to implement corrective change that moves the program from one of consistent pressure to maintain the status quo, to one that revisits and resets the basic foundations of recruitment, hiring, and orientation which in turn can undoubtedly provide confidence and eventual proficiency in advancement of the mission. Any identified struggles are not insurmountable, yet assignment of additional workload beyond the primary purpose(s) of the department cannot continue to mount without reciprocal detracting of key services as knowingly acknowledged by executive and legislative leadership. In due time, Operational Analysis anticipates a return on reinvestment related to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation that will produce benefits in both new workforce prospects and retainment of irreplaceable public sector professionals.

The recommendations outlined were made with the goal of worthy consideration and hopeful implementation for the betterment of ACCGov as a local government entity. Based on this audit and the analysis that was completed, the Office of Operational Analysis plans to follow up on the findings and recommendations within one year's time to assess the status in adherence toward completion.

The Office of Operational Analysis would like to offer and extend our sincere appreciation to the ACCGov Human Resources Department, including past and present staff, for their assistance and cooperation throughout the audit process. In particular, it should not go without mention appreciation for the multiple members of the Human Resources Department who balanced interim duties during our analysis, and maintained a noticeably positive attitude while answering our inquiries. Additionally, the Manager's Office has been responsive to any requests for information or clarification, as have many other ACCGov departments/offices called upon to participate in applicable research. Finally, gratitude is warranted for the support and direction provided by the Audit Committee in acknowledgement of their respective role.



Gavin J. Hassemer, Internal Auditor

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation

This list has been compiled to aid in better understanding and enhance clarity for the reader of this report.

ClearPoint-Software used by ACCGov to track and analyze strategic plan goals, initiatives, strategies and milestones.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)- qualities, experiences and work styles that make individuals unique (e.g., age, race, religion, disabilities, ethnicity) as well as how organizations can leverage those qualities in support of business objectives.ⁱ

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.ⁱⁱ

Hiring--For the purposes of this audit, the hiring process begins when the job posting is closed and applications are referred to the hiring manager. The process is complete when the new employee reports for the first day of work.

Human resource information systems (HRIS)- software that aids organizations in managing and automating core human resource processes, providing a centralized repository of employee master data that the human resource management team needs to complete core HR tasks.ⁱⁱⁱ

Job description (JD)- Tool that explains the tasks, duties, function and responsibilities of a position. It details who performs a specific type of work, how that work is to be completed, and the frequency and the purpose of the work as it relates to the organization's mission and goals.^{iv}

Munis- The ERP (enterprise resource planning) software implemented organization-wide in phases by ACCGov starting in 2023, used to manage all core functions, including financials, procurement, HR, payroll, and revenues. ACCGov also uses Munis ESS (employee self-service) software for employees to enter their own hours, and view their payroll information online.

NEOGOV- An HR management software suite, of which ACCGov uses the Insight applicant tracking system (ATS) to help recruit and hire candidates. GovernmentJobs.com is NEOGOV's public sector specific job board.

Orientation--According to the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), new hire orientation (NHO)“...is a formal event to introduce the new employee to the organization's structure, vision, mission and values; review the employee handbook and highlight major policies; complete required employee paperwork; review pertinent administrative procedures; and provide mandatory training.”^v

PerPro-Performance Pro software, ACCGov’s employee performance management system, re-deployed during FY23 after an initial deployment among a pilot group of users in FY21. The platform is currently administered by the Organizational Development division, but is scheduled to be taken over by the HR Department in FY25.

Recruitment--For the purposes of this audit, the recruitment process begins when a position becomes vacant or is newly authorized, and ends when the job posting closes and qualified candidates are referred to the hiring manager.

R/H/O (recruitment, hiring, and orientation)- abbreviation used in certain sections of the document for brevity and clarity.

SMART goal-The SMART acronym is a commonly used guideline for goal setting. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Society for Human Resource Management (SRM)- a professional human resources membership association headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. SHRM promotes the role of HR as a profession and provides education, certification, and networking to its members, while lobbying Congress on issues pertinent to labor management^{vi}

Standard operating procedure (SOP)- A document that details the set of activities necessary to complete a task.^{vii}

Take Aim Learning Management System (LMS)- An online learning platform, purchased and administered by the Organizational Development division of the Manager’s Office. Fulltime employees must have access to Take Aim in order to use PerPro software, ACCGov’s employee performance management system.

World Email- An email sent to all holders of accgov.com email accounts, with the exception of county commissioners unless they specifically request opting in.

ⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/tools/toolkits/introduction-to-human-resources-discipline-diversity-equity-inclusion>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.eeoc.gov/overview>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.techtarget.com/searchhrsoftware/definition/HRIS>

^{iv} <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/tools/express-requests/job-descriptions-developing-amp-using>

^v <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/topics/onboarding/process>

^{vi} <https://www.shrm.org/about>

^{vii} <https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/what-is-an-sop>



OVERVIEW

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One



Overview Introduction

On November 7, 2023 the Mayor & Commission approved the FY24 Audit Workplan for the Office of Operational Analysis. A Comprehensive Performance Audit of employee recruitment, hiring and orientation by the Human Resources Department was part of this plan. An audit of this type constitutes an in-depth, comprehensive review of the stated objective and scope, and usually occurs over a six-month or longer time period.

It is the intent of the Internal Auditor, at the request of the Audit Committee, to assure that certain practices of the government's operation are examined in detail by the Operational Analysis office. Topics for comprehensive audits are recommended by the Mayor & Commission, Internal Auditor, Manager's Office, and the Audit Committee. These topics are then examined on a quantitative prioritization matrix, which includes factors such as length of time since previous internal audit, community and organization impact, scheduling, and risk exposure. Other factors that influenced the decision to examine the recruitment, hiring and orientation practices of the Human Resources department include disruptions in the workforce due to the state of emergency enacted during the COVID-19 outbreak, an excessive number of vacancies across all departments over recent years, and the ongoing challenge of assuring compensation is competitive with other employers in the area.

The audit scope comprised four sections of review and analysis:

Department Review & Analysis

The HR Department of ACCGov comprises five divisions. Since the Comprehensive Performance Audit focused mainly on the Employment Division, research and fieldwork was limited primarily to the processes, procedures and activities of that particular division. However, since budgeting and staffing of the entire department can have impact across divisions, it was necessary to analyze the department functions as a whole.

Recruitment Review & Analysis

Recruitment of employees includes advertising open positions and accepting applications.

Hiring Review & Analysis

For the purposes of this audit, hiring practices begin at that point applications meeting minimum qualifications are referred to the hiring manager for review.

Orientation Review & Analysis

Orientation is the process of educating a newly hired employee on the organization's procedures and practices, as well as completing all required forms in order to receive pay, and, in the case of full-time employees, to receive benefits.

In order to provide a thorough analysis, the following objective of the audit was developed and submitted to the Manager and Department Director:

“To evaluate practices related to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation as compared to similar jurisdictions and industry standards, with consideration to the unique expectation of ACCGov. This audit will determine compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies; but, also effectiveness in achieving appropriate staffing levels. Focus will be on whether current approaches to employment are efficient, relevant, and impactful based upon present challenges to human resource functions.”

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One

Audit scope is subject to adjustment during the audit process, but will not be revised to extend beyond the stated topic. The scope of the audit was as stated:

1. Map the process of recruitment, referral, interview, candidacy, and employment offer in comparison of average timeline.
2. Identify divisions/staff involved in employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation.
3. Review present approach to job marketing, advertisement, and outreach initiatives.
4. Evaluate the use of software (e.g., NEOGOV) and application of any quality control measures.
5. Review policies, standard operating procedures, best practices, and regulations that govern the evaluation of applicants, including minimum qualifications, application screening, and referrals.
6. Determine potential impact(s) of benefits offered (e.g., health insurance, pension) in relation to recruitment and prolonged retention of employees.
7. Review employee orientation

Process

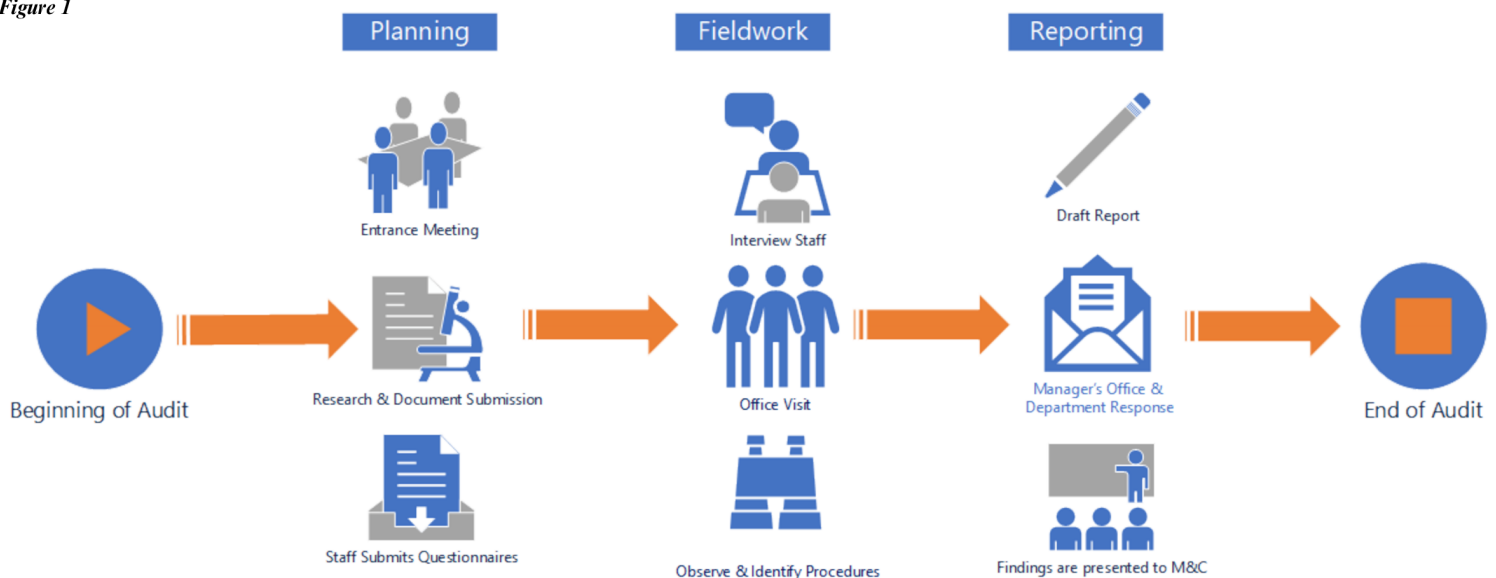
The process for an internal, comprehensive performance audit involves planning, fieldwork and reporting.

During the planning phase all involved parties are notified and an initial entrance meeting is held to establish the audit timeline, as well as discuss the scope and audit objectives. During this phase information will also be gathered through research, questionnaires, and documents submitted by the department being audited. Dates for field visits and in-person interviews are agreed upon.

The fieldwork phase of the audit includes on-site visits so that OA staff can observe department operations, interview staff, perform analyses, identify anomalies and write recommendations for improvement.

The third phase of the audit is reporting. At the conclusion of this phase an exit interview is scheduled to review the audit findings with the department director. OA staff prepares a draft report, to which the department director formulates a written response and corrective action plan. These documents are combined, along with a management response, into a final report which is presented to the Mayor and Commission for approval.

Figure 1



OVERVIEW

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One

Methodology

It is the intent of the Internal Auditor to perform constructive audits and present reports which are clear and concise. This report highlights factual information, both positive and negative, so that those with responsibility have the opportunity to respond and build off the suggestions provided. The findings of the Comprehensive Performance Audit are presented so as to be easily understood by those outside ACCGov in a manner that is relatable, but sound in logic. The layout has been designed in a direct and deliberate style to facilitate usability for all interested parties.

In order to assure and maintain objectivity, independence, integrity and professionalism, OA acknowledges generally accepted government auditing standards to gather and analyze data. Information used for this report was attained directly from the Human Resources Department and other ACCGov entities, along with publicly available documents and information. Information from sources outside of ACCGov are cited where applicable. Quantitative analysis has included a review of ratios and trends among data in order to isolate unusual circumstances. Qualitative analysis has been judged to be valid when it is logically comprehensive, complete, professional, and significant to the reported findings.

Specific activities of research and analysis included:

- Research of federal, state and local laws and regulation governing ACCGov's recruitment, hiring and orientation practices
- Gathering of information specific to ACCGov recruitment, hiring and orientation practices through research of digital and printed sources
- Analysis of documentation requested from the HR Department and subsequently submitted by HR Director and staff
- Data and information gathered from written surveys prepared by OA staff and submitted by each employee of HR
- Oral interviews with members of the HR Department
- Observation of office operation by shadowing staff during normal operations
- Information obtained through questionnaires and interviews with ACCGov department directors and hiring managers who interact with the HR Department in the recruiting, hiring and orientation process
- Tracking of four job postings, from the initial post through hiring, or for the duration of the audit, if positions were not filled during that time
- Meetings with NEOGOV representatives

For this comprehensive performance audit, a document request list was submitted to the department during the entrance meeting. Approximately 36% of the documents were submitted by the initial request date, and upon extension of the submittal date, 73% were submitted. Six formats of questionnaires were developed—one for each the Director and Assistant Director, one for Employment Division staff, one for the Employment Division Administrator, one for the other division administrators and one for the non-Employment Division staff. The response rate prior to field interviews was 85% for general HR staff.

The fieldwork phase comprised 131 hours over 21 days, including office visits, shadowing staff and interviews. Email and phone calls were used as a means of follow-up and for normal means of communication such as scheduling matters and clarification questions.



Figure 2

OA Staff completed

131

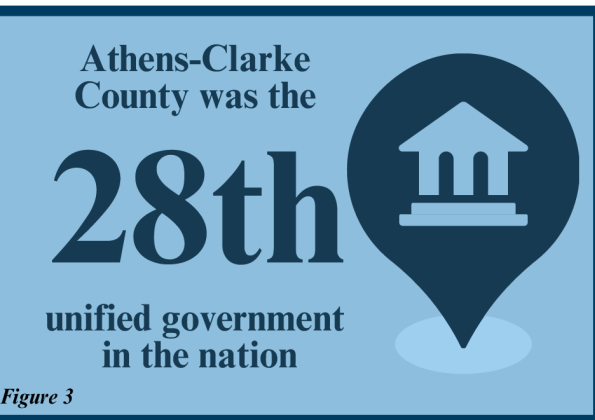
hours of field work during
the FY24 Comprehensive
Performance Audit

OVERVIEW

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One

Because of the diverse nature of operating units (departments, divisions, offices, courts, adjunct services) within ACCGov, the scope of this audit may not include recruiting, hiring and orientation practices for some positions. For example, some elected officials choose to opt out of the services provided by ACCGov HR, while certain positions such as the administrative support for ACC-UGA Cooperative Extension Office are unique in partnership. Wherever relevant to this report, special circumstances will be noted and identified.

Background



The Athens-Clarke County Unified Government was created in January 1991 after a referendum was passed by City of Athens voters and voters in Clarke County on August 7, 1990. ACCGov then became only the second city-county consolidated government in the state.

Unification was particularly complicated for the Personnel Departments of Athens and Clarke County. Differences in salaries, benefits, raise structures and classification systems created a lengthy process for consolidation, as well as displeasure among some employees. The unification of salary systems was not actually complete until June of 1996.ⁱ

Charter Mandates

The Charter for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County became effective on June 30, 1992. Several items had significant ramifications for the personnel system.

A merit system was mandated, with certain positions outlined in the charter to be exempt. Pension rights, without interruption, were protected for the employees of both governments and a new pension system established for new employees. New employees entered under the system created for the consolidated government; other employees could choose their current pension or move into the new system.

The Charter also specifically protected all full-time staff of both the city and county to retain a position “as similar in nature as practicable” within the new government. Furthermore, no employee could receive “any diminution of compensation, including, but not limited to salary, insurance, retirement benefits, annual sick leave, and rights provided by the merit system.”

A twelve-month window was created from the date of the Charter to assure uniform compensation for employees performing the same functions and having the same responsibilities, and it was mandated that duplicate functions could only be eliminated through attrition or reassignment. A cap was placed on the number of positions, not to exceed the combined number of authorized positions of the two entities at the time of the enactment of the Charter, except as mandated by law.

Reception of Unification by Employees

According to research from the University of Georgia published in the year 2000, Athens and Clarke County employees were surveyed in 1991, just before the implementation of unification, and employees seemed to have some optimism about the new structure. However, surveys in the first two years of the unification showed most ACCGov employees believed there were no positive results for them with the unification. Authors of the study attributed the natural turmoil caused by the process of consolidation to be the basis for the negative outlook. Another study was then made in 1997, which showed workers to see more positive impacts than reported in the intermittent years, but less optimism than the pre-unification survey.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ A History of the Unification of the Athens-Clarke County Government By Douglas E. Smith May 1997
ⁱⁱ DURNING, DAN; NOBBIE, PATRICIA DAUTEL. In: Public Administration Quarterly, 2000 Jul 01. 24(2), 140-168.



OVERVIEW

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One



Overview Commission Reports

A quadrennial Overview Commission of the consolidated government was mandated by the Charter. The Overview Commission was to be nominated by the Grand Jury as a panel of 20 residents (two from each district) and present a report of its findings regarding the operation of the consolidated government. Reports were submitted in 1996 and 2000, the latter of which recommended the Charter be amended to call for a decennial commission. That recommendation was adopted, so subsequent reports were submitted in 2010 and 2020.

1996 Report

The original structure of the Department of Personnel for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County was led by the Personnel Director with an Administrative Assistant overseeing three divisions: Personnel Services, Organizational Development and Risk Management. There was a total staff of 21 full-time employees and budget of approximately \$1M.

During the four-year period studied, the number of full-time employees increased from 1233 to 1295. The processing of pension checks and the workers compensation program were moved in-house from third party providers. Benefits were expanded to equalize those previously only offered to city or to county employees. A new employee classification system was implemented in 1995, resulting in 237 appeals, of which 33 were changed. Initially the appeals were handled by the consulting company which implemented the classification system, but later personnel staff were trained and appeals were handled in house. The initial move to the new classification system was not fully funded, meaning it would take 22 years for employees to meet the midpoint of their salary range. In response to the findings of the 1996 report, the Mayor and Commission indicated that “The Personnel Department has begun conducting annual wage studies so that it can proactively adjust the pay tables and not have to undertake a major adjustment such as the one necessary [in 1995].” (OA staff was unable to obtain evidence that any such wage studies were conducted.)

2000 Report

The committee creating the 2000 Overview Report chose to focus on four specific areas of the Unified Government and did not provide an in-depth report and recommendation regarding the Personnel Department, as it was still known. It did make the recommendation to change the name to “Human Resources Department.” The report also notes, “The department’s current recruitment efforts are to be commended. On-going efforts include: career/job fairs at local high schools; local, regional, and national advertising; internet service; and posting job announcements at churches and at local agencies such as the Department of Labor and the Veterans Administration and Rehab Services” The report goes further, “With the current labor shortage, the Overview Commission recommends that the government continue funding the Personnel Department at or above the previous years’ budget to ensure recruitment efforts are successful.”

2010 Report

The 2010 Committee reported on each of the 41 departments, courts and offices which existed at the time. The report on the Human Resources Department opened with the statement, “Many positive changes have taken place in the Human Resources Department during the last seven years resulting in greater efficiency and tremendous cost savings for ACCUG. We congratulate the staff on its improvement. There were five recommendations which followed:

1. Clarify employee job descriptions and continue training for department heads in updating job descriptions.
2. Increase women and minority participation in salaried positions especially at the department head level.
3. Emphasize hiring of multi-lingual staff members and encourage training of all staff to become multi-lingual.
4. Implement career development and succession planning for key salaried positions.
5. Ensure equitable and transparent performance appraisal procedures to ensure that all employees participate actively and with full knowledge of the process.

OVERVIEW

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter One

2020 Report

The members of the 2020 Overview Commission faced significant complications in research and reporting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the first of the Overview Commission reports to integrate the “Mayor and Commission Strategic Commitments and Goals” into the report. This structure, in which each goal is listed under one of the six strategic commitments—Healthy, Livable, Sustainable Athens-Clarke County; Transportation, Mobility and Connectivity; Shared Prosperity; Safe and Prepared Community; Informed and Engaged Citizens; and Accountable and Responsive Government—lent clarity and focus the Overview research and recommendations.

The Committee assembled the recommendations of the 2010 Overview Committee, and recorded the responses from the departments regarding progress on the recommendations. Of the five recommendations involving the Human Resources Department from the previous oversight report, Recommendation #2 was recorded as “In Progress” and all other recommendations were recorded as “Partial Action Taken.”

Athens-Clarke County Employment Statistics

According to 2020 Census data, Athens-Clarke County had a population of 128,671, which was an increase of 10.24% over 2010. The 2020 labor force totaled 58,206 and at that time the unemployment rate was 6.4%.ⁱ ACCGov is the fifth largest employer in the county, behind the University of Georgia, Piedmont Healthcare, Clarke County School District and St. Mary’s Healthcare. UGA employs over 11,500, which is more than the other top six employers combined.

The unemployment rate for the Athens-Clarke County Metropolitan Statistical Area has been steadily falling over the past decade, from 8.0% in January of 2013, to a preliminary estimate of 2.8% in December of 2023, with the exception of unusually high unemployment rates in 2020 attributable to the COVID-19 emergency measures enacted by federal, state and local governments.

The workforce of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government comprises nearly 1800 full-time positions across 43 departments, offices and courts. Additionally, the organization carries between 200 and 400 part-time employees, who may work seasonally or year-round.

A survey conducted on behalf of ACCGov in 2023 by the consulting firm ETC with a 49% response rate showed 86% of respondents would recommend employment with ACCGov. Also of those surveyed, 87% think ACCGov is a good employer.

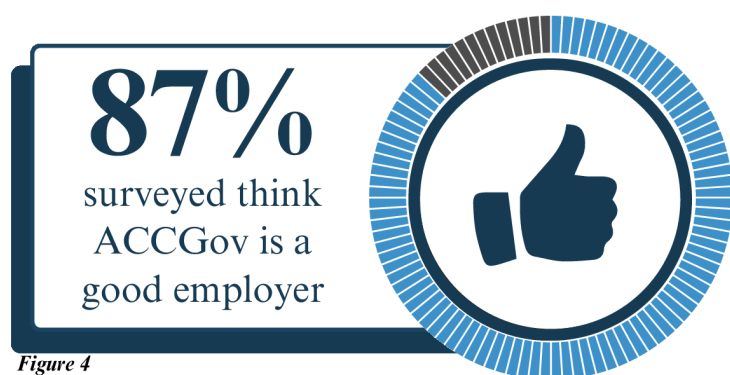


Figure 4

iii

i https://ce.naco.org/?county_info=13059

ii https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LAUMT13120200000003?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true

iii Athens-Clarke County 2023 Employee Survey Findings Report Submitted to the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government by: ETC Institute
725 W. Frontier Lane, Olathe, KS 66061 October 2023

Analysis Introduction

In the course of this audit OA staff used an approach of working from high-level analysis of the departmental structure, to the operations of the Employment & Employee Relations Division, and finally to the individual processes involved in recruitment, hiring and orientation. Several items of note may give better context, as follows:

- ACCGov's fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30. The current audit has taken place during FY2024. The budgeting process begins in October, when proposals for capital and operating budgets are developed, and is finalized in June with the commission's vote of approval. At the time of this audit, the proposed FY25 budget was in review by the Mayor & Commission, but not yet approved.
- ACCGov migrated to new financial software, Munis, during FY22. The payroll module was implemented in April of 2023. The Payroll Coordinator position was vacated through promotion to another department in August of 2023, and the position was filled in January of 2024. In the interim, and throughout the course of the audit, the HRIS Developer was primarily overseeing payroll processing.
- The Organizational Development (OD) Division of the Manager's Office purchased digital software, Performance Pro (PerPro) in FY21. While OD has been responsible for initial deployment of the software, once it is fully implemented HR is expected to take over administration of PerPro during FY25.

- During the audit, in February 2024, the HR Director departed to pursue an outside opportunity. In April 2024 the Assistant Director (Interim Director) left the department to accept another position in ACCGov. The Employment Administrator was then appointed Interim Director and the Compensation & Payroll Administrator was appointed as the Interim Assistant Director. As of this audit report, the department as a whole has a 20% vacancy rate (five positions).



- The Employment & Employee Relations Division experienced some turnover during the audit, with at least once vacancy within the division throughout the majority of the study.
- HR was included in the 2018 ACCGov Space Allocation Plan as a department which had outgrown its space at that time. Pursuant to options in that plan, it is currently proposed that HR will remain in its current building for the foreseeable future, but be allotted additional space when an adjacent department moves to a different building currently under renovation.
- The State of Georgia Executive Order for the COVID-19 State of Emergency was in effect from March 14, 2020 through June 30, 2021, ending approximately two and a half years prior to the beginning of this audit. The US Dept. of Health and Human Services COVID-19 Public Health Emergency status was ended in May of 2023.
- An organization-wide employee satisfaction survey was conducted in Summer of 2023, results of which have been used in certain portions of this analysis.
- Not all of the employees served by the HR Department are subjected to the exact same processes, procedures and standards. However, all recruiting, hiring and orientation practices are expected to adhere to the basic principles put forth by HR and applicable rules and regulations.

The above items are presented to provide a better understanding of the complex nature of all that is involved in employee recruitment, hiring and orientation. Research done during this audit has indicated that the above factors at some time or another in the past few years have had direct impact on those processes, and/or caused disruption to the HR department's functioning as a whole.

Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis considers the employment recruitment, hiring and orientation practices and implementation of human resource departments of other jurisdictions. The scope of this comparative analysis consists of thirteen jurisdictions which have been subdivided to include three counties neighboring Athens-Clarke County (Barrow, Jackson, and Oconee), three counties within a roughly a 65-mile radius (Forsyth, Gwinnett, and Hall), three consolidated governments in the state (Augusta-Richmond, Macon-Bibb County, and Muscogee County Columbus), two university cities (Tuscaloosa, AL and Gainesville, FL.) and two counties (Greenville County, SC and Orange County, NC) of other states which host a similar size university or similar size overall population relative to Athens-Clarke County.

This comparative analysis consisted of reviewing the publicly available information on each jurisdiction's Human Resource Department's website and critically evaluating information as it pertained to the recruitment, hiring and orientation processes and procedures of each individual HR department. The overall budget of the most recent fiscal year available and the total staffing number for each HR department reviewed were also considered, though strict comparison of those factors alone was not utilized by OA for conclusive purposes given the numerous variables that can manipulate any deductive reasoning. Staff from the Office of Operational Analysis contacted the Human Resource Departments of each jurisdiction to answer questions pertaining to the areas of interest (processes/procedures/practices) of the audit in greater depth than available on the website.

Direct comparisons regarding employment practices can be difficult due to the many factors which influence where people seek employment, both geographically and insofar as the employer itself. Factors which vary widely when attempting to compare recruitment, hiring and orientation among municipalities include:

- Competition with major industries lying within the jurisdiction
- Real estate and housing prices within the jurisdiction
- Ability of workers to commute
- State laws and municipal ordinances
- Community amenities
- Likelihood of a cohabitant to follow a spouse or partner for career or education goals
- Education and training opportunities
- Degree to which community supports public service

For example, while Athens-Clarke County is the smallest land area in the state, it is the regional hub for both education and healthcare, with government and healthcare workers comprising the vast majority of its workforce. It is important to note, particularly in the recruitment aspect of this report, an “apples-to-apples” comparison can only be made with municipal employers insofar as actual practice.

It should also be kept in mind that ACCGov must consistently compete for human talent with UGA, Piedmont and St. Mary's healthcare systems, Clarke County and surrounding school districts, as well as private industry such as Caterpillar, Carrier, Pilgrim's and others.

In preparing a comparative analysis, OA staff used qualitative and quantitative research to provide insights which, in their professional opinion, compare and contrast for constructive purposes the recruitment, hiring and orientation practices of ACCGov with other local governments in the state and the nation. Overall, OA staff found the operations of ACCGov's HR Department to be well in line with the staffing, budget, employment rate and qualitative measures identified for comparison insofar as online presence, customer service and the overall recruiting, hiring and orientation process.

Among the seven counties adjacent to and within a 65-mile radius which were studied, ACCGov ranked fifth in employment rate for county employees with 86.1% of positions filled. Oconee and Barrow were highest, with 94.8% and 91.6% rate respectively, and Jackson County was lowest with a 67.3% rate of filled positions.

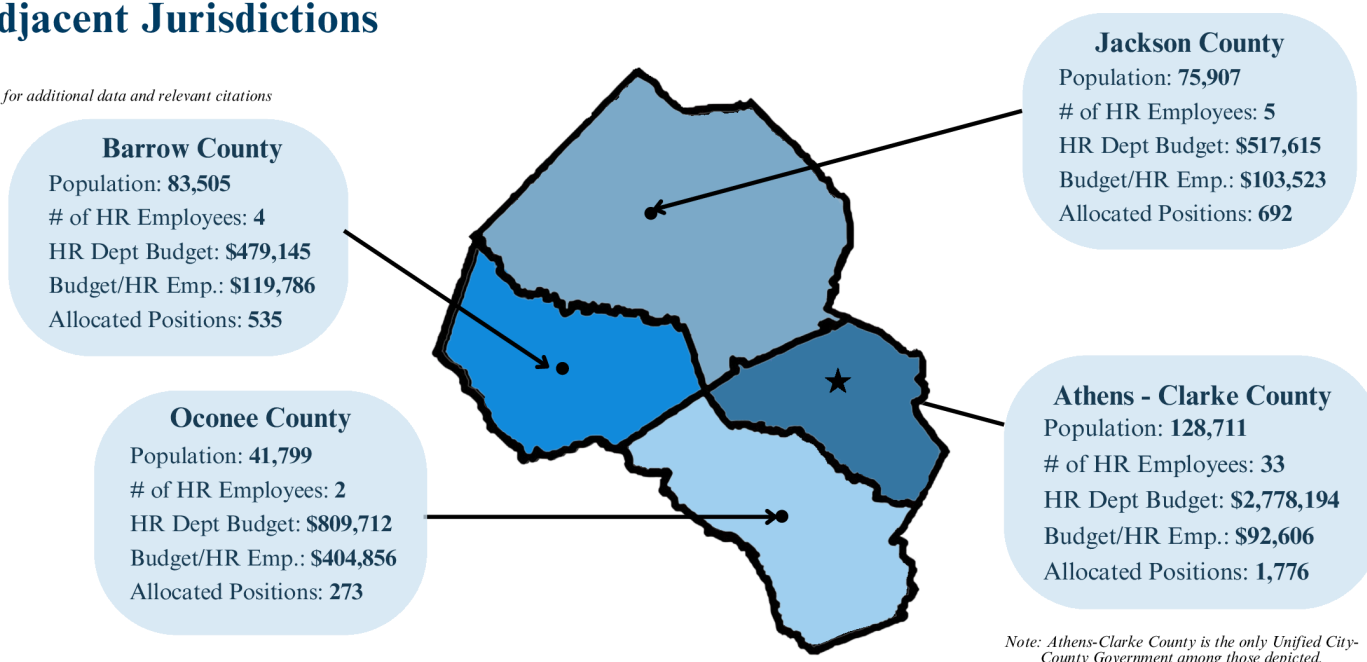
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Adjacent Jurisdictions

Figure 6

See Appendix L for additional data and relevant citations



Barrow County lies to the east of ACC and was created in 1914 when portions of Gwinnett, Jackson and Walton were carved away. Barrow County has experienced 20% population growth since 2010.ⁱ Growth in the county can be attributed to its lying at the intersection of SR29 and SR53, important connectors among Athens, Atlanta and Gainesville, and feeding access to I-85 in the north-easternmost portion of the county. The combination of rural preservation and highway access contributes to its commercial growth, as well as making it home for workers commuting to and from surrounding counties. Fort Yargo State Park sits in the southern center of the county. Winder is the county seat and its government employs 265. There are five other cities and towns in Barrow County, whose governments employ an estimated combined total of approximately 175.

With a population of approximately 90,000, Jackson County is the fourth fastest growing county (of those with a population of at least 20,000) in the US.ⁱⁱ There are seven cities within the county, including the county seat Jefferson, and I-85-adjacent Commerce. The combined population of all cities within Jackson County is approximately 35,000, or almost 40% of the population. Located northwest of ACC, the two were a single county until 1801, when the City of Athens was developed around the University of Georgia. While Jackson County retains pockets of its once-rural character, its boom can be attributed to industry, commerce and suburban residential development, much of which feeds nearby cities of Athens, Atlanta and Gainesville.

Oconee County was created in 1875 when it separated from Clarke County, and adjoins ACC to the south. In the latter 20th century, it was considered a “bedroom community” for Clarke County, particularly for University of Georgia faculty and staff. Northern Oconee County has experienced significant growth over the past three decades with the establishment of the SR316/Epps Bridge corridor as a thriving commercial area and significant medical industry presence. Additionally, the Caterpillar plant established in 2012 which straddles the ACC/Oconee line has spurred growth along the Hwy 78 corridor in both counties. Oconee County is a separate government entity from its county seat, Watkinsville, for which the City Clerk serves as the HR Director and has approximately 20 employees. Four other towns within Oconee County employ minimal or no staff.

The history of these four counties—Barrow, Clarke, Jackson and Oconee—as interconnected geographically and economically impacts public sector employment for all of them. The shadow of metropolitan Atlanta consistently looms large and provides significant challenges insofar as competition for skilled workers, described as follows.

ⁱ <https://www.barrowga.org/DocumentCenter/View/138/2019-to-2021-Barrow-Economic-Development-Annual-Report-PDF>
ⁱⁱ <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/slideshows/fastest-growing-counties-in-america>

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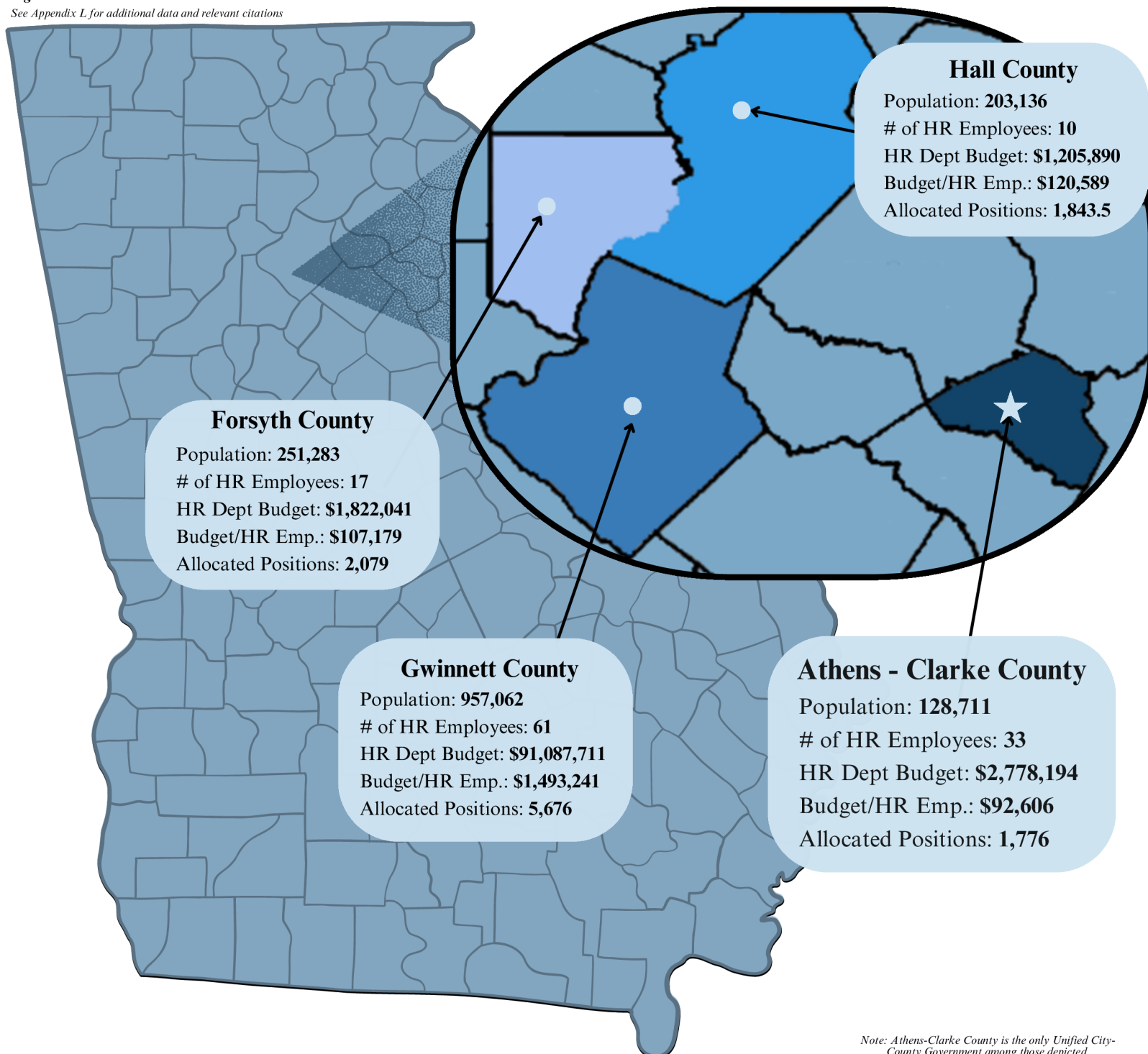
Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Sixty-Five Mile Radius

Forsyth, Gwinnett and Hall counties have borders within an approximately 65-mile radius of ACC. Forsyth and Hall counties have populations of approximately 250,000 and 200,000 respectively, while Gwinnett's population is nearly one million. OA staff determined it is important to include such jurisdictions given the competition in the public sector across all job types and salary levels in a tight job market. Gwinnett County, in particular, has tremendous resources and simply by virtue of its population and land mass--which is 3.5 times larger than ACC--is able to substantially impact competition on ACCGov for employment.

Figure 7

See Appendix L for additional data and relevant citations



Note: Athens-Clarke County is the only Unified City-County Government among those depicted.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

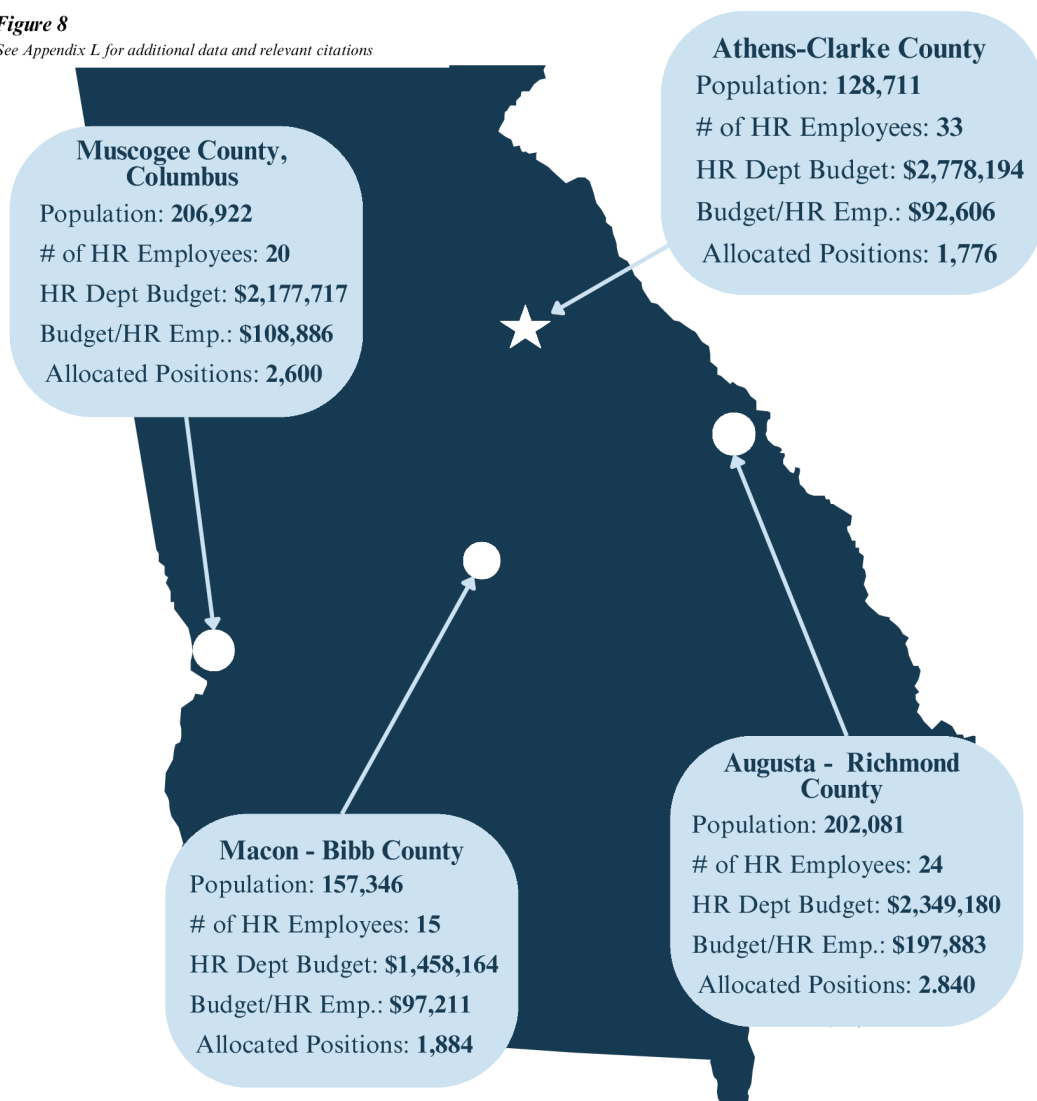
Consolidated Governments

By researching various counties in Georgia, OA found that the structure of local government entities, as well as the structure of Human Resources Departments, varies greatly. Because the consolidated city-county model like that of ACCGov is only used by a handful of Georgia counties, OA found it important to look at the local government sponsored or supported HR Departments within three other consolidated governments: Augusta, Columbus and Macon-Bibb.

Muscogee County-Columbus Consolidated Government is located in southwest Georgia along the Georgia-Alabama state line. The City of Columbus has a population of 206,922 according to the 2020 census, making it the second largest city in the state outside of Atlanta. The Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) comprises six counties including one in Alabama and had a population of 328,883 according to the same census.

Macon-Bibb County is a consolidated government located in central Georgia and has a population of 157,346 according to the 2020 census. The Macon-Bibb County Government (MBCG) HR department was the recipient of the 2023 GLGPA (Georgia Local Government Personnel Association) Large County Achievement Award. Macon-Bibb County and the Bibb County School District also have a formal agreement to allow high school juniors and seniors to intern and apprentice within various department of the county [Appendix G].

Figure 8
See Appendix L for additional data and relevant citations



There is also a formal Training and Development Policy which states that the HR Department intends to provide bi-annual training to all permanent full-time and part-time employees, and goes on by definition to state, "...Bi-Annual Training will be held at the Macon City Auditorium. It is intended that through MBCG Employee Training and Development Policy, annual training be defined as mandatory training (2) times per year; once in the Spring, once in the Fall, and will be deemed as a government-wide training evolution." [Appendix H]

The county HR Department also has a partnership with Middle Georgia State University, offering 100% online courses to employees at a flat rate of \$131 per undergraduate credit for employees, family members and contractors.

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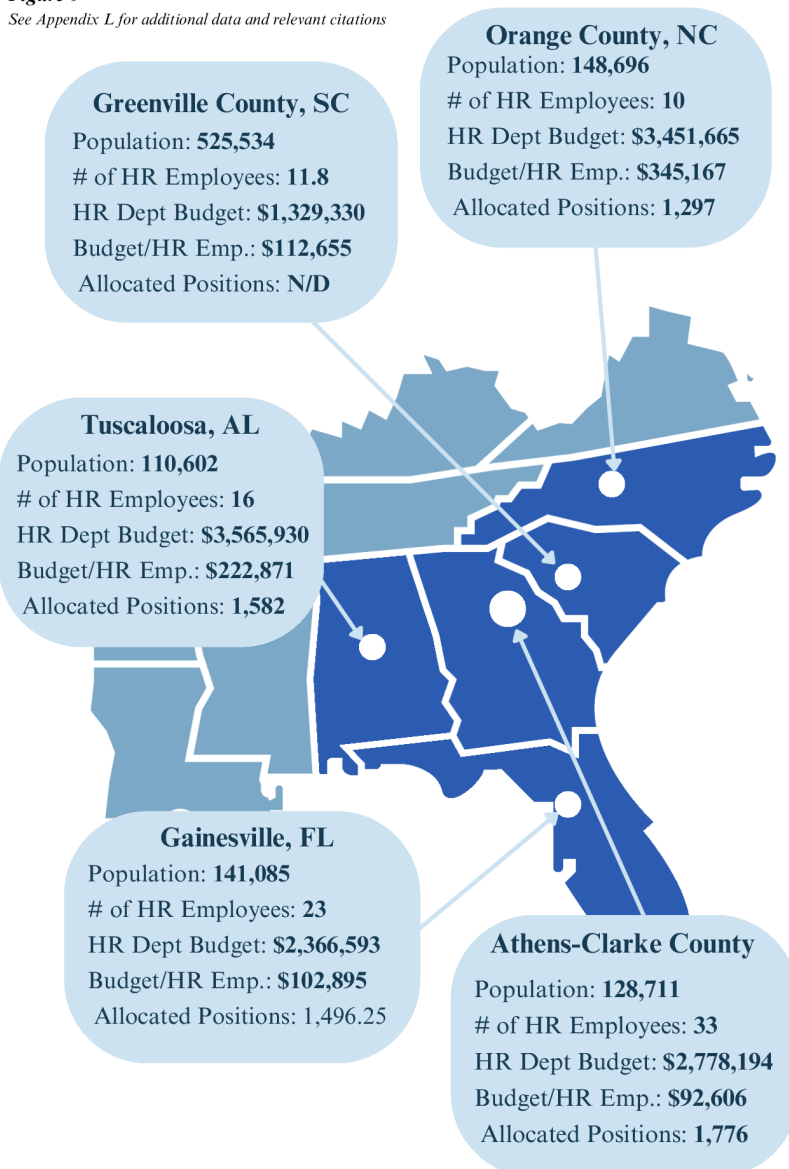
Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Augusta-Richmond County Georgia is a consolidated government located in east Georgia along the Georgia-South Carolina state line and has a population of 202,081 according to the 2020 census. August and Richmond County were consolidated in 1996, making the Augusta Metropolitan area the second largest in the state behind Atlanta. Augusta is home to Augusta Technical College, Augusta University, and Paine College, as well as satellite campuses for East Georgia State College, Georgia Military College, and Brenau University. The largest public sector employer for Augusta is the major army base Fort Eisenhower with 29,252 employees. Augusta-Richmond County is the seventh largest with approximately one-tenth that number. Other major public-sector employers include Augusta University, the National Security Agency, Augusta University Health System, Richmond County School System, and Piedmont Augusta, all having between 3,000 and 7,000 employees.

Selected Southeastern Cities & Counties

Figure 9

See Appendix L for additional data and relevant citations



Note: Athens-Clarke County is the only Unified City-County Government among those depicted.

Gainesville lies in north-central Florida and is home to the University of Florida, with a student population of just over 55,000 students. The city of Gainesville has a population of approximately 150,000 and is the principal city of the Gainesville metropolitan area.

Tuscaloosa lies in west-central Alabama is home to the University of Alabama, with a student population of nearly 40,000 students. The city of Tuscaloosa is the county seat of Tuscaloosa County and has a population of approximately 110,000.

Orange County is part of the Raleigh-Durham-Cary North Carolina Combined Statistical Area, and has a population of approximately 150,000. Its county seat is Hillsborough, and it is home to the UNC Chapel Hill, the flagship university of the University of North Carolina System and the oldest state-supported university in the US. Parts of Durham and Mebane lie within Orange County, along with the cities of Carrboro and Chapel Hill. Greenville County is the most populous county in South Carolina, and also home to the largest school system in the state, the Greenville County School District. The county seat and largest City is Greenville, with a population of 72,310, and there are five other cities and towns which lie within the county.

Orange and Greenville counties were chosen in order to better understand comparable and contrasting recruitment, hiring and orientation practices and challenges which may transcend characteristics of the state of Georgia. Neither state has any city-county consolidated governments.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Financial Review

A focused review of employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation spending within the Human Resources Department FY24 Operating Budget, and previous three fiscal years, was performed to gain a sense of revenue/expenditure trends, and provide detail of funds utilized in these efforts. This was accomplished through an understanding of financial documents, interviews, observations, and data analysis. Year-over-year approved budget totals for specific divisions or programs are compared against end-of-year results in the summary table(s) below, as are select, associated line-item accounts.

Overall, the annual operating budget, with respect to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation has increased in general fund spending over recent history by a margin of 2-11% from the previous year as measured by the Employment Division's allocated funds. It should be noted that not all of the division's budget is solely dedicated to these programs, and other portions of the Human Resources departmental budget are utilized toward recruitment, hiring, and orientation efforts in varying degrees. For purposes of this audit, OA focused on the Employment Division, but for a broader perspective, does reference other financial sources, as appropriate.

Figure 10: Departmental Budget (General Fund & Special Programs Fund)

Fiscal Year	Fund	Approved Budget	% +/- Previous Year	Year End Expenditures	% of Yearly Expenditures	Notes
FY21	General	\$1,768,629	--	\$1,486,189	84%	--
	Special Programs	\$25,000	--	\$190,446	82%	FY21 Budget Revised ⁱ
FY22	General	\$1,907,928	+8.5%	\$1,752,401	91.3%	FY22 Budget Revised ⁱⁱ
	Special Programs	\$25,000	-71.3%	\$12,815	19.2%	FY22 Budget Revised ⁱⁱⁱ
FY23	General	\$2,057,859	+15.5%	\$2,113,360	95.3%	FY23 Budget Revised ^{iv}
	Special Programs	\$25,000	+18.3%	\$31,314	39.7%	FY23 Budget Revised ^v
FY24*	General	\$2,353,194	+8%	\$1,796,270	74.9%	FY24 Budget Revised ^{vi}
	Special Programs	\$425,000	+498%	\$12,539	2.7%	FY24 Budget Revised ^{vii}

*Year-to-Date expenditures (4/29/24)

ⁱ FY21 Approved Budget was revised by \$207,203 increasing total approved budget to \$232,203

ⁱⁱ FY22 Approved Budget was revised by \$11,909, increasing total approved budget to \$1,919,837

ⁱⁱⁱ FY22 Approved Budget was revised by \$41,757, increasing total approved budget to \$66,757

^{iv} FY23 Approved Budget was revised by \$159,600, increasing total approved budget to \$2,217,459

^v FY23 Approved Budget was revised by \$53,942, increasing total approved budget to \$78,942

^{vi} FY24 Approved Budget was revised by \$45,000, increasing total approved budget to \$2,398,194

^{vii} FY24 Approved Budget was revised by \$47,628, increasing total approved budget to \$472,628

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

The Human Resources Department receives mostly general fund dollars for the purpose of attracting and maintaining a full governmental workforce, but there are also other sources, like the Special Programs Special Revenue Fund; Self-Funded Insurance & Claims Fund; and, Self-Funded Health Insurance Fund, among others that contribute to revenue/expenditure streams in departmental/division staffing. As a whole, two of the previously mentioned funds are specifically accounted for below as based upon their respective influence on employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation. The degree of annual variance amongst these two sources is highlighted for informational purposes to bring attention to both overall departmental spending of general dollars, as well as defined expenses for special programs, like tuition reimbursement, which can play an influential role in recruitment. Though not indicative of accounting error, almost every annual budget underwent some sort of revision (+/-) from that of the originally approved version, as detailed in the notations. A majority of this is likely to adjust for actual revenues/expenditures that occur throughout a fiscal year in order to transfer funds or realistically set account parameters from that of estimated projections/forecasts.

FY24 Special Programs Fund

Tuition Reimbursement \$122,628ⁱ

- This account is used to fund tuition reimbursement for ACCGov employees pursuing a college degree.

Professional Services \$350,000ⁱⁱ

- This account is to be used for the upcoming Unified Pay Plan study approved by the M&C.

Figure 11: Employment Division Budget (General Fund)

Fiscal Year	Fund	Approved Budget	% +/- Previous Year	Year End Expenditures	% of Yearly Expenditures	Notes
FY21	General	\$711,272	--	\$538,261	75.4%	FY21 Budget Revised ⁱⁱⁱ
FY22	General	\$785,647	+11%	\$647,638	81.6%	FY22 Budget Revised ^{iv}
FY23	General	\$760,873	+2%	\$709,745	87.6%	FY23 Budget Revised ^v
FY24*	General	\$816,150	+4%	\$667,508	79%	FY24 Budget Revised ^{vi}

*Year-to-Date expenditures (4/29/24)

As is typical with most general fund departmental budgets, compensation and benefit line items total the majority of the Human Resources Department expenditures, including the Employment Division, though a few other operating accounts are worth mention based on allocated amounts in relation to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation. In particular, the FY24 Employment Division budget lists \$348,521 for full-time salaries, or 41.2% of the total divisional budget.

ⁱ FY22 Approved Budget was revised by \$45,000, increasing total approved budget to \$2,398,194

ⁱⁱ FY22 Approved Budget was revised by \$47,628, increasing total approved budget to \$472,628

ⁱⁱⁱ FY21 Approved Budget was revised by \$2,900, increasing total approved budget to \$714,172

^{iv} FY22 Approved Budget was revised by \$7,774, increasing total approved budget to \$793,421

^v FY23 Approved Budget was revised by \$49,600, increasing total approved budget to \$810,473

^{vi} FY24 Approved Budget was revised by \$30,000, increasing total approved budget to \$846,150



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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two



Thus far into FY24 (78.9% usage at time of analysis), a few account lines are overdrawn within the allocated Employment Division budget. Most of these do not appear impactful to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation efforts though, with perhaps only one potential exception being that of software as identified below. Based on previous fiscal year close-out accounting for the department, any overages will likely be evened out by unused surplus dollars in other account lines.

FY24 General Fund

Software \$42,403 (\$69,802 spent thus far)

- This account is used to cover the annual renewal of various software programs for employment and employee relations (i.e. NEOGOV, HR Helpdesk, HR Acuity System, etc.), as well as job advertising expenses.

Training-Special Programs \$90,600

- This account is used to conduct various testing and assessments related to specific department employment, like that of public safety (Police, Fire, Sheriff, etc.) in which specialized administrator are often called upon and related travel expenses are compensated.

Medical Services-Employees \$72,000

- This account is used for pre-employment screenings and testing related to physical and mental fitness as designated by position-type requirements.

It should be noted that there is no specific line-item account for “recruitment” related initiatives within the Employment Division annual budget, or the Human Resources Departmental budget, in general. Coinciding with further explanation provided in this report pertaining to the topic of recruitment, this confirms that active recruitment is not a practice presently pursued by Human Resources, as there are no corresponding funds. If in fact limited recruitment does take place, it is infrequent enough to not require standalone sources of financing, and may ultimately be covered through alternative means of spending within the departmental/divisional budget.

When considering the continuous training that the Employment Division staff must undergo to obtain or maintain applicable certification(s) and advanced knowledge of professional practices related to recruitment, hiring, and orientation, the annual budget indicates \$7,632 in combined financial resources available for this purpose. This total amount is similar to that awarded in FY23, FY22, and FY21, and is divided accordingly into multiple line-items like that of travel & lodging; conferences & schools; dues & memberships; books & subscriptions; and associated mileage reimbursement. There are five positions within the division, including the administrator, that must share these dollars annually.

Employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation does not generate traditional revenue; however, it does incur a variety of expenses for which all ACCGov financial policies and regulations are applicable.

When necessary or advantageous, the department is expected to work with the Purchasing Division of the Finance Department to procure items over established thresholds, whether by multiple quotes or requests-for-proposals. One such example would be the recent selection of various consultants for professional services, like those used to conduct compensation studies, perform hiring tests, or manage insurance/retirement programs. Multiple software programs would also be a qualifying purchase under these parameters.

At time of the audit, Human Resources did not identify any active grant awards that would significantly impact revenue reporting, especially with regard to employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation. It was unclear as to whether the department does attempt to pursue grants related to these programs when applicable. Historically, the human resources function within ACCGov has no need for capital projects funding, unless directly linked to equipment or infrastructure, including information technology.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Associated assets are primarily limited to physical office space and storage, as well as information technology and software. No vehicles are presently assigned to the department, though one had been up until recently. A review of annual expenditures did yield commitments to professional services for consulting, training, and/or testing, while other, consistent obligations include those for software, as previously detailed.

Understanding, as previously mentioned, that compensation of talented Employment Division staff is a primary expenditure, all within the department are expected to log hours into the Munis ESS software system for final approval. OA staff did not conduct a forensic analysis for abnormalities by way of sampling timesheets to validate actual time worked. It should be noted that current, general office policy is to allow telework a maximum of two-days per week, with three-days on-site, and Wednesday being mandatory for all employees to be at the office.

During individual interviews with staff, the common practice for Employment Division employees is to schedule various applicant interviews for posted ACCGov positions on days they would regularly be in the office, in turn accomplishing administrative tasks at-home. Originally, it was unclear as to whether ACCGov departments are expected to perform interviews in accordance with the three available days per week that an assigned HR Generalist is typically in-office, or, if the HR Generalist accommodates departments by adjusting their weekly work schedule to meet demand. Upon conclusion of the draft report, HR clarified that HR Generalists do alter their schedules to accommodate departmental interviews, ensuring telework does not interfere with this process.

Department Operations

ACCGov's HR Department is housed in the government's Satula Building at the corner of Satula Avenue and Boulevard. The building is shared with two other departments, Finance and Housing & Community Development (HCD) and the Organizational Development (OD) division of the Manager's Office. There are approximately 40 parking spaces immediately surrounding the building, approximately half of which are reserved either for employees or ADA parking. Approximately 70 additional parking spaces are available on adjacent or nearby land owned by ACCGov. The single-story building was built in 1980 and is 17,200 square feet.

Visitor entrances are available from both the rear and front of the building into a common area. There are reception windows for Finance, HCD and HR in the lobby, and two computer kiosks for public use. Also accessible from the lobby area are the HR Conference Room, the Training Room, and a break area. The OD office is accessible from a hallway adjacent to the Training Room. All office suites require a key for entry, although the HR suite has a remote switch, or "buzzer," so that a receptionist may allow employees and visitors into the office areas. Operating hours for all offices in the building are Monday-Friday from 8:00AM-5:00PM. The online presence of ACCGov's HR Department is found at accgov.com/hr, or by search of the ACCGov website under departments. The 2018 Space Allocation Study found that although the Human Resources Department benefits from a shared location with the Finance Department, there is a pressing need for additional space to match the growth of the Department.

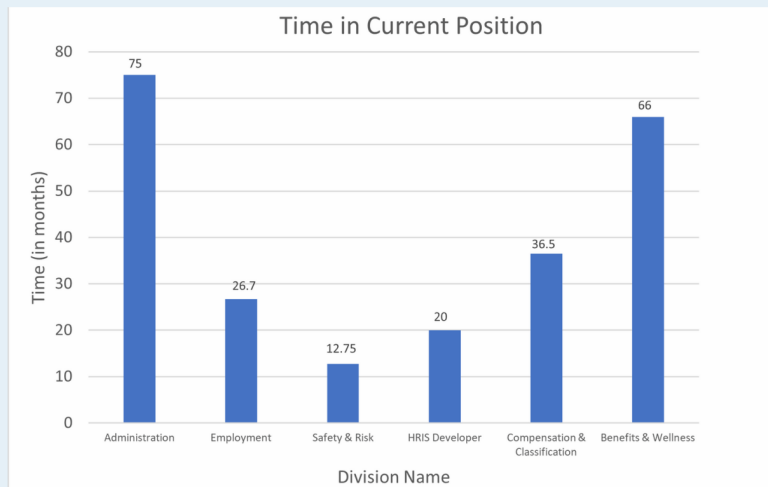


Figure 12: Average amount of time each HR Employee has been in their position, organized by division.

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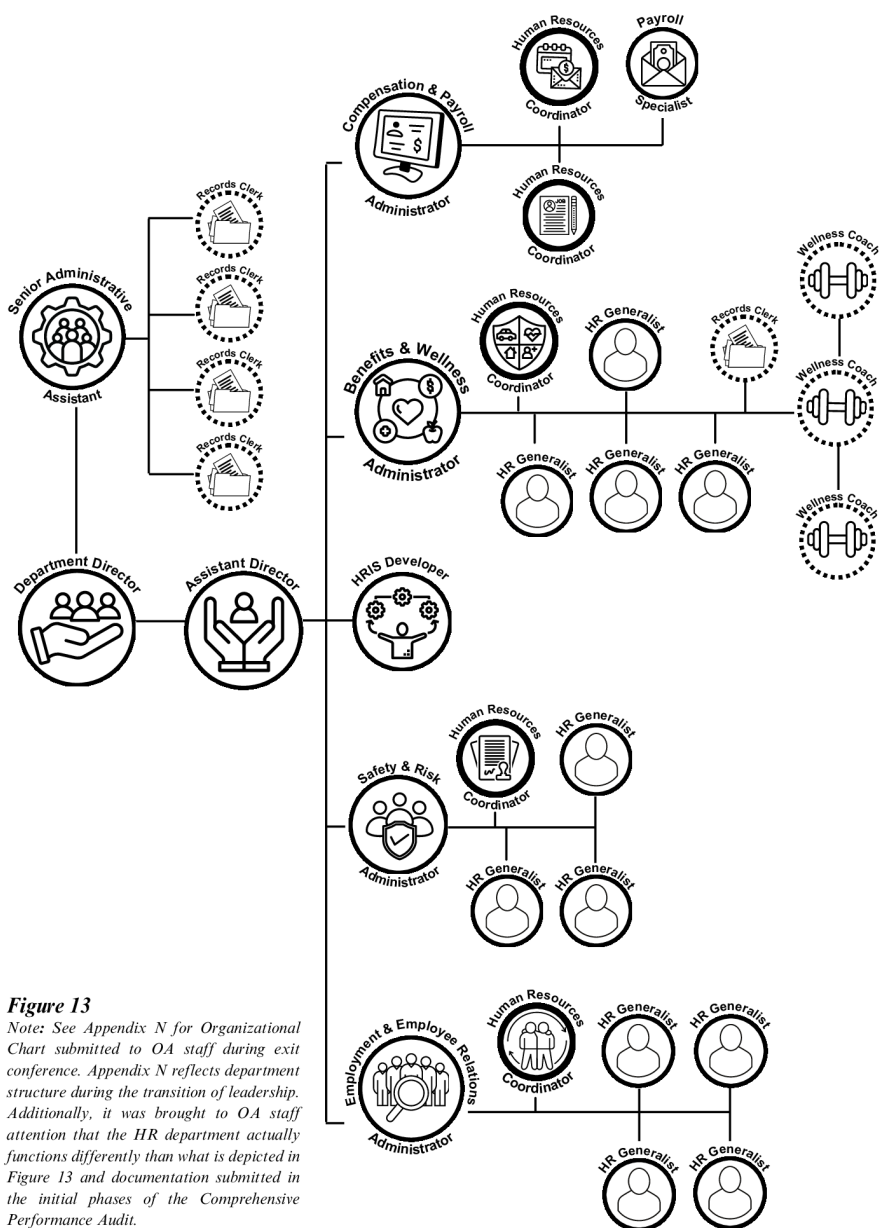
Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

At the time of the audit, the Human Resources Department comprised 33 total positions. That number included both full and part-time employees. Of those 33 positions, 8 are part-time and the other 25 are full-time. The breakdown of staff by position includes the Director and Assistant Director, four Administrators, five Coordinators, eleven HR Generalists, five Records Clerks, three Wellness Coaches, one Senior Administrative Assistant, an HRIS Developer and a Payroll Specialist.

From organizational charts submitted to OA at time of the audit, the Assistant Director and Senior Administrative Assistant report to the Department Director. All Administrators and the HRIS Developer report to the Assistant Director. All Coordinators and Generalists report to their respective Division Administrators.

Additionally, the department grew in FY24 with the addition of one HR Generalist, and has requested funding for another Coordinator position in FY25. At the time of this report, the HR Department has a vacancy rate of approximately 20% across all full-time positions. As part of the FY25 budget, HR has submitted a revised Organizational Chart further distinguishing hierarchy and direct reports.

Director and Assistant Director Overview and Analysis



The Human Resources Department comprises five divisions and an HRIS Developer. Those divisions are: Administration, Employment & Employee Relations, Compensation & Payroll, Benefits & Wellness, and Safety & Risk.

The role of the Director is not only to represent the department but also to manage its activities, administer organization - wide policies and assist in all human resources related activities. Additionally, per the job description of the position, the Director oversees the recruitment and retention program for the government.

Similar to the Director, the Assistant Director directs, plans and coordinates the activities of the HR Department. Some such activities include ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, establishing goals for the department and aiding in administrative investigations. Additionally, in the case of absence, the Assistant Director performs the duties of the Director.

At the time of this report, the Employment Administrator is serving as the Interim HR Director and the Compensation & Payroll Administrator is serving as the Interim Assistant Director, due to both positions becoming recently vacant.

Figure 13
Note: See Appendix N for Organizational Chart submitted to OA staff during exit conference. Appendix N reflects department structure during the transition of leadership. Additionally, it was brought to OA staff attention that the HR department actually functions differently than what is depicted in Figure 13 and documentation submitted in the initial phases of the Comprehensive Performance Audit.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Director and Assistant Director Analysis

A review of the Human Resources Director and Assistant Director yielded the following points of significance:

- The audit found that very few staff members are able to perform tasks outside their division or specific capacities, with little to no emphasis being put on cross training across the different divisions. Although some staff have moved to other divisions within the department, thereby receiving training by necessity, OA staff did not observe specific cross-divisional support when there were position vacancies.
- When there is a vacancy within a division, OA staff observed that the workload was distributed throughout the division. Although some vacancies were present for extended periods if time, staff members from other divisions were not trained to properly and effectively perform the necessary tasks. Instead, the Division Administrator would step in and aid staff members to complete any imperative tasks.
- This situation has been magnified with the departure from the department of both the HR Director and Assistant Director within a few months' time of each other. The appointment of two of the Division Administrators as Interims underscores the importance of cross-training, succession planning, and both the consistency and documentation of processes.

Administrative Division Overview and Analysis

The Administration Division is led by the Senior Administrative Assistant, who reports to the Director.

The Senior Administrative Assistant gives administrative and technical support to the Department Director and the rest of the departmental staff. In addition to this support, the Senior Administrative Assistant receives, processes and facilitates responses to inquiries from both internal or external stakeholders.

There are four part-time Records Clerks in the Administrative Division who aid the Senior Administrative Assistant in daily duties, including greeting and assisting customers (both in-person and by telephone), creating electronic files for new employees and managing document retention in adherence with the Georgia Records Retention Schedule. Records Clerks are also allowed to follow the HR Department telework guidelines (two days a week) for their work of scanning and filing documents into a content management software, Laserfiche.



Figure 14: Image depicts the the front desk for the Human Resources Department, located in on Satula Ave.

Additionally, since January of 2017, the Administrative Division is staffed by local high school students through the Great Promise Partnership (GPP) with the Georgia Department of Education. Currently, there are twelve students throughout ACCGov employed through GPP. At the time of the report, two are currently working as Office Assistants with the HR department. Their work generally includes customer service, clerical work and administrative assistant duties. The GPP students are subjected to a different hiring process from what is mentioned in this audit. A student will become ineligible upon graduation, through failure to adhere to ACCGov policies, or for poor academic performance.

The GPP students and the Records Clerks work the front desk and are expected to maintain the highest level of customer service. While working the front desk, the Administrative Division also primarily oversees the lobby kiosks which are public computers available for anyone to apply for jobs within ACCGov. There are a total of two kiosks in the lobby and these two computer stations are currently the only publicly available computers to be used for job applications within ACCGov.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Administrative Division Analysis

- OA staff observed the Administrative Division staff spending the majority of their time on records retention and ensuring documents are scanned into Laserfiche. The Senior Administrative Assistant ensures that the Records Clerks who work remotely do so with records that are not confidential or safety sensitive.
- There are two public kiosks in the HR lobby which allow job seekers to apply online. OA staff observed that the kiosks are set up solely for the use of applying for jobs through the accgov.com website.
- There was a binder containing job postings next to each computer, but very little customer traffic for these two stations was observed.
- Records Clerks and GPP students work at the front desk (see Figure 14), but OA staff observed that customers experienced delayed service and/or incomplete answers to certain questions. Whether as a matter of managerial discretion, or as a matter of organizational culture, questions are usually forwarded from those working the front desk to HR Generalists, Coordinators, etc., who come to the front to help customers and answer any questions, including assisting at the employment kiosks.



Figure 15: Image of kiosk for the public to apply for jobs online via NeoGov.

Safety & Risk Division Overview and Analysis

The Safety & Risk (S&R) Division of the HR Department comprises a Division Administrator, one Coordinator, and three HR Generalists.

The role of the S & R Division Administrator is to direct and supervise ACCGov's self-funded, self-administered workers' compensation and general liability program. Additionally, the Administrator oversees any safety-related programs and training for ACCGov employees. The S & R Administrator also oversees random drug testing, which is a different process from the drug testing that occurs during the screening of a job candidate. Additionally, the training programs held by the Division Administrator are not for all new employees and are not mandatory. At the time of this audit, these activities do not occur regularly, but instead on an ad hoc basis for employees across the government.

Within the S & R Division there is one coordinator position, the Contracts Analyst Coordinator, who is in charge of coordinating contract analysis and review for the department. As the Contract Analyst Coordinator, the position focuses primarily on reviewing and evaluating requests for proposals and the related contract awards to guarantee there are proper levels of performance, bonding and insurance coverage.

The final three positions within the division are all HR Generalists. These Generalists work with the Administrator and Coordinator for all daily activities within the division. Some of the work they do includes analyzing all claims data and preparing statistical analysis; administering safety and loss prevention; audits and inspections of all departments; and ensuring the organization is in compliance with applicable laws, policies and procedures.

Safety & Risk Division Analysis

- Safety & Risk is one of two divisions of the HR department that does not play a direct role in employee recruitment, hiring and orientation. OA Staff observed that HR Generalists within this division are not cross trained among the other HR divisions to provide support as needed, despite the title of "generalist."

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HRIS Developer Overview and Analysis

The addition of a Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Developer was a FY23 initiative. The position was created with the goal of managing, planning, directing and coordinating HRIS activities to enhance the proper use of technology and to ensure organizational goals and requirements are being met in an admissible, efficient and productive manner.

The primary pillars of this position include system design and management; data governance and quality control; reporting; and payroll supervision and coordination. Due to staff turnover, and the implementation of a new organization-wide financial system, Tyler Technologies' Munis, the HRIS Developer has been unable to perform many of the functions charged to the position, other than those related to the Munis transition and processing payroll.

At the time of the audit, the HRIS Developer does not have direct reports, but does assist with the supervision, evaluation and hiring of payroll staff. Although the HRIS Developer works closely with the Compensation & Payroll Division, it is at the moment a 100% remote position.

HRIS Developer Analysis

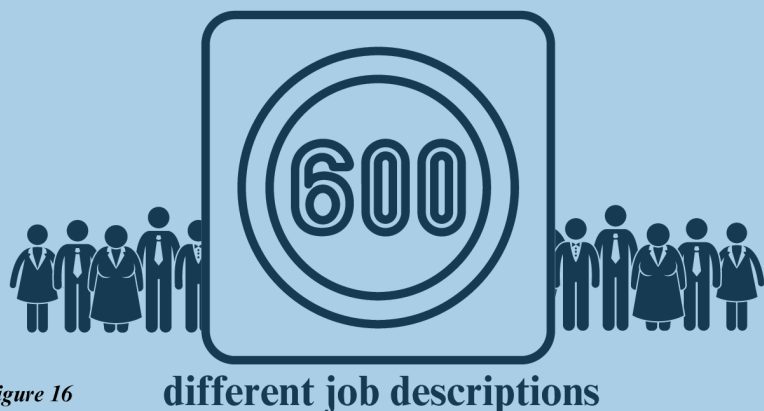
- The HRIS Developer does not play a direct role in employee recruitment, hiring and orientation.
- OA Staff noted that, given that there are several software systems which need to be aligned for the success of each, there is significant weight of institutional knowledge for this position. OA staff was unable to identify contingencies (succession planning or cross-training) for the HRIS Developer position.

Compensation & Payroll Division Overview and Analysis

The Compensation & Payroll Division is charged with ensuring the prompt and accurate categorization and compensation for all ACCGov employee positions. The division consists of the Compensation & Payroll Administrator, Compensation & Classification Coordinator, Payroll Supervisor Coordinator and Payroll Specialist. Like most of the other divisions within the HR Department, the Compensation & Classification Administrator reports to the Assistant Department Director.

The Compensation & Payroll Administrator is in charge of the approach to compensation for ACCGov in reference to personnel strategic planning, recruitment, retention and reward. In addition to these compensation-related duties, other duties include conducting market surveys, updating pay plans, overseeing above entry salary requests and supporting payroll activities.

The Compensation & Classification Coordinator is in charge of over



Unlike the other divisions of HR, there are two Coordinator positions within the division. One Compensation & Payroll Coordinator oversees job descriptions and proper classification across all positions. When a department director or hiring manager makes substantive edits to a job description, the HR Generalist will refer the changes to this Coordinator so as to assure the updates will not affect classification and/or pay grade. Likewise, if a new position or a position reclassification is requested or necessitated, this Coordinator ensures proper grading. Both Compensation & Payroll Coordinators report to the Division Administrator.

Figure 16

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

The other Compensation & Payroll Coordinator works with the Payroll Specialist to process payroll for all ACCGov employees and retirees. This involves processing time entry, benefits, garnishments and other associated payroll functions three to five times per month, since different groups of payees--current employees, retirees, monthly salaried employees--have different payroll schedules. On occasion additional payrolls are processed to correct errors.

Among other duties of payroll staff are providing customer service for current and former employees and departmental payroll coordinators, processing required tax forms, and receiving/coordinating Personnel Actions Forms (PAFs) so that a new hire's information can be put into Munis. This allows an ACCGov email account to be set up, and in turn provides access to the LMS and other software platforms. Both the Coordinator and Specialist report to the Compensation & Payroll Administrator. Additionally, the HRIS Developer has job responsibilities involving the supervision of the payroll staff.

Compensation & Payroll Division Analysis

- The Compensation & Payroll Administrator is cross-trained in both functions and seems to have extensive institutional knowledge, and is well versed on other duties within the department.
- At the time of the report, it is important to note that the Compensation & Payroll Division Administrator is serving as the Interim Human Resources Assistant Director.
- All of the Administrator duties are still being partially completed by the Division Administrator but all other duties regarding budget items, ClearPoint and billing/invoices have been divided among all Division Administrators (including those serving in interim positions).
- Although it is a single division, its two pillars (payroll and compensation/classification) have very little overlap in daily activities. The Compensation & Classification Coordinator is not involved in payroll duties, which are primarily overseen by the HRIS Developer. Due to the complexities of MUNIS, the HRIS Developer is extensively involved in payroll processing and ensuring its timeliness.

Benefits & Wellness Division Overview

The Benefits & Wellness Division is in charge of creating, executing, and overseeing the employee and retiree benefits program and wellness program. As the largest division within the HR Department, the Benefits & Wellness Division comprises a Benefits & Wellness Coordinator, one part-time Records Clerk, three part-time Wellness Coaches, four HR Generalists, and the Benefits & Wellness Administrator to whom all the aforementioned employees report.

The Division Administrator and Benefits & Wellness Coordinator secure, oversee, and coordinate all benefits for ACCGov full-time employees and retirees, as well as dependents, if eligible and enrolled. There is one HR Generalist assigned to Benefits, who principally deals with pension calculations and other retiree benefits. The other three HR Generalists, along with the part-time Wellness Coaches, are assigned to Wellness and they develop, coordinate, implement and oversee the wellness and fitness programs for full-time employees, retirees and eligible dependents.

The Benefits & Wellness Administrator, Coordinator, HR Generalist assigned to benefits, and part-time Records Clerk have offices in the Satula Building, as did two of the HR Generalists assigned to Wellness



Figure 17: Image of main hallway within HR Department looking back out towards the lobby.

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until FY24, when the office was restructured and space assigned to the Payroll Coordinator and Payroll Specialist, in order to give them proximity to the rest of the Compensation & Payroll employees. Currently the Wellness team works remotely, with extensive sight visits to various ACCGov facilities, including the Fitness Center in the former Georgia Square Mall property.

Prior to the COVID-19 state of emergency declarations, the Benefits & Wellness Team were the primary facilitators of the in-person orientation held monthly for a full day in the Satula Training Room. During the pandemic shut-downs, these orientations were halted and orientation information was sent out via email with various links and attachments, which is still the practice today. However, the Benefits & Wellness Division has developed an in-person New Hire Meet & Greet, which has some of the features of the pre-pandemic orientation, but is not intended to be a replacement for the information contained in the orientation email.

In the 2023 ACCGov Employee Satisfaction Survey, the Importance-Agreement Assessment Matrix of the results rated Compensation & Benefits as one of the “Opportunities for Improvement” In the same survey, 79% of respondents either Strongly Agree/Agree they value 100% paid pension plan. However, 15% of respondents did not know benefits included more than just health, and 22% disagreed that ACCGov does a good job of informing employees of benefits.

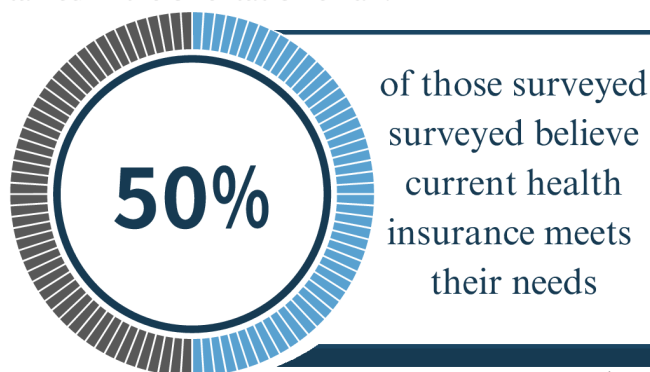


Figure 18

Benefits & Wellness Division Analysis

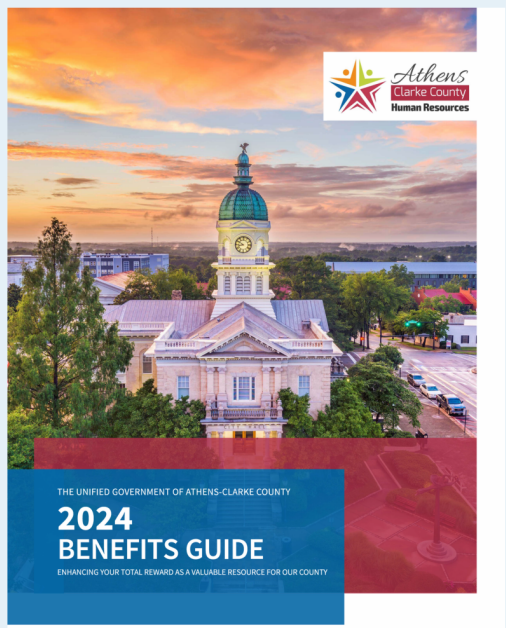


Figure 19: Image of cover of 2024 Benefits Guide

- Comparative analysis research, as well as research from professional HR sources and the above-mentioned survey, indicate that employee benefits can be leveraged for employment recruitment and retention. However, potential and current employees must know about and understand the value of benefits in order for them to be effective recruitment and retention incentives.
 - It follows that, in order to create an effective way to educate and inform these audiences regarding the value of benefits, ACCGov should prioritize and emphasize the benefits most valuable to the most employees, particularly low-cost health insurance and the no-cost pension plan, and de-prioritize or eliminate some lesser-used benefit programs such as secondary or alternative insurance and discount programs, for which the government is likely being used as more of a marketing tool for the vendor than actually giving the majority of employees valuable benefits.
- It is the professional opinion of OA staff that the myriad of functions of the Benefits & Wellness Division, along with the absence of office space for the Wellness team, tend to make it a less than ideal division to handle ownership and logistics of the orientation process.
 - As noted in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report, the purchase of up-to-date software with a dedicated orientation module could be invaluable in allowing employees to take full advantage of benefits, and translate into better recruitment and greater retention.

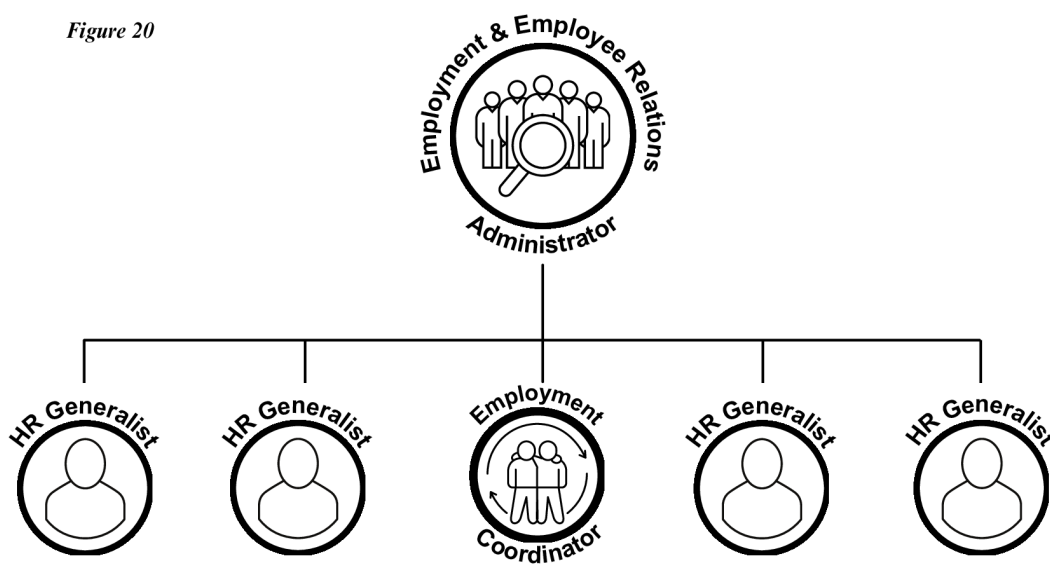
Employment & Employee Relations Division Overview

The Employment & Employee Relations Division of HR comprises an Administrator and four HR Generalists.

The Employment & Employee Relations Administrator is in charge of designing, organizing and overseeing the recruitment and hiring programs, and validating the assessment functions administered during the hiring process. Additionally, the Administrator oversees and aids in employee relations matters, as well as ensuring activities are in compliance with local, state and federal laws.

The HR Coordinator Assigned to Employee Relations organizes employee relations operations and administers investigations on behalf of the HR Department. Additionally, the HR Coordinator Assigned to Employee Relations is in charge of training associated staff on human relations topics while also coordinating staffing efforts in several departments.

Figure 20



Four HR Generalists make up the remaining staff of the division. Each HR Generalist is assigned certain departments, offices and courts in order to facilitate the recruitment, hiring and orientation process. (See Appendix F). Additional duties are distributed among the employment staff, including website maintenance, DEI and hosting training sessions for hiring managers and others involved in the recruitment and hiring process.

Like other divisions of HR, Employment Generalists are eligible for the career ladder plan that promotes them to Senior Human Resources Generalist after two years of employment, if they meet the outlined qualifications.

Employment & Employee Relations Division Analysis

- At the time of this report, the Employment & Employee Relations Administrator was serving as the Interim HR Director in addition to handling the Division Administrator duties.
- Employment & Employee Relations staff have aided in this transitional time to ensure hiring is still being completed in a legal, effective and prompt manner.
- In addition to turnover at the director level, OA Staff observed some turnover within the Employment Division. During the audit one generalist transferred to another department within the government while another was on-boarded and began training.
- There is an obvious space constraint within the Employment & Employee Relations Division. During field visits, OA staff observed three of the four generalists sharing a space, one sharing a space with the Senior Administrative Assistant.
- OA staff observed little to no cross-training within the department, so when there were vacancies within the Employment & Employee Relations Division, the Division Administrator had to take on the extra duties usually completed by an HR Generalist.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Interdepartmental Collaborations Overview and Analysis

During recruitment, hiring and orientation, there are several steps and processes that require the HR Department to work closely with other departments. Breakdowns in communication, processes or data exchange can cause significant delays and hinder the ability to attract, hire and onboard the most qualified candidates. These significant interdepartmental relationships in the recruitment, hiring and orientation process are as follows.

Finance

The HRIS Developer is the administrator of the Munis software program used to process payroll. To assure new hires are able to be entered into the payroll system, the HRIS Developer and Compensation & Payroll Division must work closely with the Munis administrators in the Finance Department.

Information Technology (IT)

The IT Department is responsible for setting up each new full-time employee an ACCGov email address, and in turn any software permissions necessary for that particular employee's position. It was understood that this is facilitated through email among IT, the hiring department and the Compensation & Payroll Division of HR.

Manager's Office

The County Manager's approval is needed for the addition of new positions, position reallocations or reclassifications, and above-salary requests.

Organizational Development (OD)

The OD Coordinator is the administrator for Take Aim LMS, into which most new employees are enrolled. The LMS contains mandatory training for most new hires, and also is the portal to PerPro performance evaluation software, which is necessary for all full-time employees in order to receive their performance evaluations. The process for probationary reviews did not seem to be reconciled between OD and HR at the time of this audit.

Public Information Office (PIO)

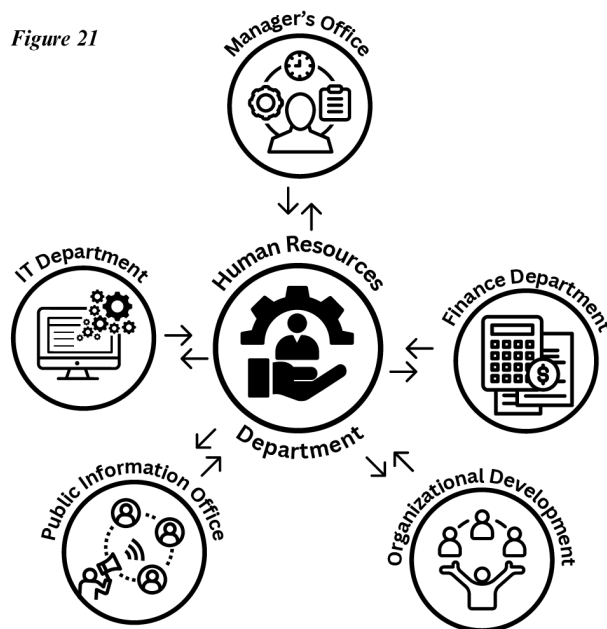
The Public Information Office is instrumental in advertising job postings in social media, on ACCGov TV, and other resources locally, statewide and nationally.

All ACCGov Departments

HR staff works with approximately 43 departments, offices and courts within ACCGov to facilitate employee recruitment, hiring and onboarding. Some of the processes which require this collaboration include:

Processing Personnel Action Forms: A PAF is required for any change in the status of an employee such as hiring, termination, promotion or transfer. This form is completed by the department in which the employee works and is submitted to HR to update all employee records. PAFs are completed manually and submitted via email.

Job Postings: The first step in job posting is reviewing and updating the job description. The JD is reviewed and edited as necessary by the hiring manager, and then sent to the HR Employment Generalist for review. The Generalist then makes the decision as to whether the changes should be reviewed by the Compensation & Payroll Division to assure the changes would not affect the classification and pay grade. JDs are edited via Microsoft Word documents using the "track changes" tool and exchanged via email.





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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two



Application tracking and routing: A majority of applications for positions within ACCGov must be submitted digitally through the governmentjobs.com website, which is the public interface for NEOGOV's Insight software module.

Applicant correspondence: Once a candidate has submitted an application, conventional practices suggest that the recruiting organization communicates the status of the application to the applicant. ACCGov uses NEOGOV software to generate correspondence with applicants. The software sends messages to candidates, acknowledging receipt of application, whether the application has been forwarded for review, and if/when the application is rejected. Parts of this process require that the hiring department communicate with HR regarding status of the applicants. These communications are in most part handled through the NEOGOV system itself.

Interviews: Once applications are reviewed, the hiring manager informs the HR Generalist of the candidates who will be interviewed. The Departmental Staff, in addition to the HR Generalist, then contacts each candidate for the interview and schedules the reservation of space. Sometimes interviews are scheduled on site at a department location, and sometimes they are scheduled in the Satula Building, where HR is housed. Some departments have protocols in place which allow them to conduct interviews without the HR Generalist being present.

Correspondence regarding interviews: The HR Generalist or hiring manager contacts the applicants to be interviewed, and facilitates communication between the applicant and the hiring manager. Communication is facilitated through email and the NEOGOV software platform.

Job offers: Once a final candidate is selected, the successful candidate is extended a conditional offer. Along with the conditional offer, forms are sent via email attachments for the candidate to complete and return to the HR Generalist. These forms may include: a Release of Criminal History Consent Form; a Criminal History and MVR Questionnaire; and an Authorization to Obtain Motor Vehicle Records. These forms are completed by the applicant via PDF forms and returned to the HR Generalist.

Hiring: Once a candidate accepts a conditional offer and background and any other qualifying tests are completed (physical, drug testing, psychological or other tests) the candidate is cleared for hire by the HR Generalist, who is responsible for arranging all such clearances. Results are communicated to the hiring manager via email and/or phone calls. Once the candidate is cleared for hire, the hiring department submits both a PAF to HR, as well as a request to IT to establish appropriate software access.

Orientation: HR sends an email [Appendix C] to the newly hired employee with instructions for completing the necessary forms. This email includes eight attachments, one of which is a 12-page document describing insurance benefits, and the remaining seven attachments are forms which are to be completed and returned to the hiring department. This email also contains a link to a one-hour and forty-eight-minute YouTube Video titled "Athens-Clarke County: Part Time New Hire Orientation."

Payroll processing: Departments must assure employee hours are correctly entered to the Munis ESS software, which is designed for employees to enter their own time manually. Each department (or division within a department), has a Payroll Preparer who verifies employee time entry and releases the payroll batch within the Munis ERP system for department head approval. The system then allows the Payroll Division to continue the process so that the Finance Department can proceed with payment.

As of the time of this audit, both Munis ESS and ERP systems were undergoing adjustments to the implementation process. Employees with computer access and skills enter their own hours into the Munis ESS system. Certain departments who use other software for tracking employee hours must have staff transfer those hours into Munis manually, as there is not digital integration with Munis.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Interdepartmental Collaboration Analysis

- The Munis software implementation has caused difficulties for the HR Department, particularly the Compensation & Payroll Division, on several fronts. First, staff is having to learn the software themselves, without quality support from the vendor. Second, the HRIS Developer, since the position was created, has had to turn attention away from other important tasks and projects to focus almost solely on Munis implementation. Finally, the lack of high-quality training in the Munis platform for payroll preparers and approvers across the organization has caused confusion and errors which the payroll staff is forced to correct on an ongoing basis.
- Not every ACCGov employee has regular access to a digital platform in which to self-enter time, so a supervisor is relied upon to assist in the proper input of employee time.
- The collaboration among IT, OD and HR is effortful, and would benefit greatly from a process/project management professional who could develop automated exchanges of information to replace what is often carried out by phone calls or emails in the current arrangement, leading to errors in data exchange and often delays in the orientation process for new hires.
- The interactions between the individual hiring managers/departments are also effortful and lack automated exchanges of information, as well as clearly defined and time-bound procedures. Detailed discussion can be found in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report (Findings #1 & 2).

Strategic Plan Goals

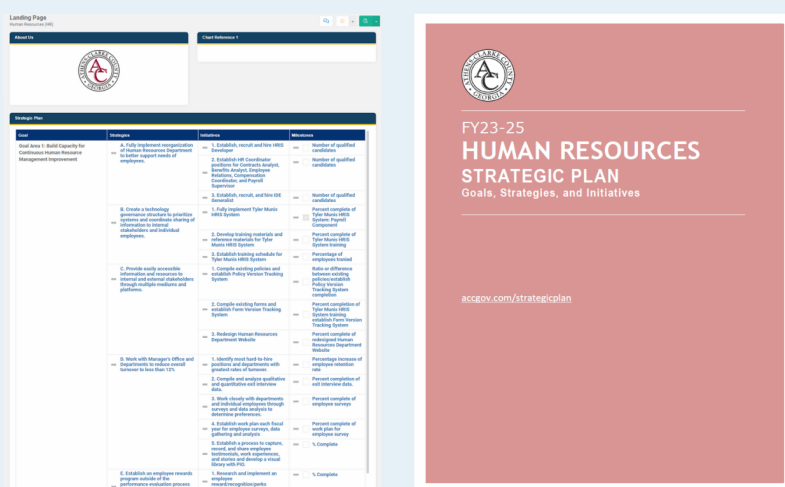


Figure 22: Images of HR Dept. ClearPoint homepage (L) and cover of Human Resources FY23-25 Strategic Plan (R)

The Human Resources Department currently has two strategic plans that they follow: the Mayor & Commission's Strategic Plan and their Departmental Strategic Plan. Currently, relevant points within both plans have many quantifiable goals, but the use of qualitative language makes it difficult for these goals to be achieved.

At the time of the report, although most of their goals hope to increase both effectiveness and employee morale, few have corresponding quantitative initiatives for the department to follow.

Upon analysis completed by OA staff, the following goals stated in the Mayor & Commission Strategic Plan are relevant to both employee recruitment, hiring and orientation and the Employment Division as a whole.

- Develop strategies to recruit, reward and retain high performing employees, both internally and externally, including individuals coming out of the justice system.
- Meet current and future workforce needs
- Prepare employees for their next job through succession planning and developing a clear path for growth/development
- Develop training for employees based on identified needs to deliver exceptional services
- Develop a career pipeline at ACCGov for returning residents
- Become an employer of choice in the community
- Create a culture for high performance: increase interdepartmental collaboration, better cross departmental workforce strategy

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

Recruitment

According to the Society of Human Resources Professionals (SHRM), employee recruiting is “the activity of identifying and soliciting individuals—either from within or outside an organization—to fill job vacancies or staff for growth.” For the purposes of this audit, the recruitment process begins when a position becomes vacant or is newly authorized. Once this occurs, the hiring manager of the department with the vacancy notifies HR in order to verify or update the job description. Once a requisition is submitted through NEOGOV software and details of the job posting are clarified between HR and the hiring department, the job posting can “go live” on the GovernmentJobs.com site. The recruiting process includes both internal and external candidates.

The recruitment process ends when the job posting closes and qualified candidates are referred to the hiring manager. However, there are several circumstances in which the process may be re-opened, among them: not enough qualified candidates apply; qualified candidates are not acceptable to the hiring department; a job offer is not accepted; or a candidate either withdraws or does not pass required background checks or other requirements.

According to ACCGov’s ClearPoint strategic plan tracking software, some of the Human Resources Department’s milestones regarding recruitment under the strategy to “Meet current and future workforce needs include”:

- Completed 2024 EEOC Report reaffirming and updating goals related to addressing recruitment of diverse applicants including ACCGov policies that achieve organizational EEO goals.
- Continued to manage posting of all vacancies through multiple mediums including NeoGov, Governmentjobs.com, Indeed, Google, Android, ZipRecruiter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Diversity Jobs, Athens Tech, UGA, GLGA Marketplace, Good for Work and job specific platforms (ICMA, American Planning Association, Transit Talent, Animal Jobs Digest, etc).
- Managed 77 job postings during Q3, preparing informational graphics and advertising in all appropriate outlets. Worked closely with Police, Public Utilities, and Sheriff to enhance outreach to diverse populations.

Figure 23

“Employee recruitment is the activity of identifying and soliciting individual - either from within or outside an organization - to fill job vacancies or staff for growth”

In the first 6 months of
FY24, HR received
5,487
job applications
through NeoGov

Figure 24



- During the first six-months of FY24, received 5,487 applications. For FY24 3rd Quarter, received 2,615 applications for a FY to date total of 8,102 which would indicate ACCGov is experiencing much higher numbers of applications overall. The number of applications peaked in FY19, falling in FY20 and FY21. In FY22, ACCGov enjoyed a significant rebound from 7,055 applications in FY21 to 7,757 in FY22. In FY23, received 7,123.
- Job vacancy list is distributed no less than weekly to all internal employees and to over 25 other community resources.
- HR continues to work directly with the Manager’s Office and Finance to estimate three aspects of pay that will enhance recruitment, retention including estimation of appropriate Pay Table increase, Market increase, and Pay for Performance Increase for FY25 as informed by the ECI-G and the CPI.
- All HR Employment Generalists continued to advance recruitment, leadership, employment and promotion of members of under-represented groups within ACCGov, and in the recruitment and hiring process. In effort to reach more racially diverse candidates they work with community organizations, like the Northeast Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce, the Minority Business and Nonprofit Association, and the Athens Boys and Girls Club program YouthForce.

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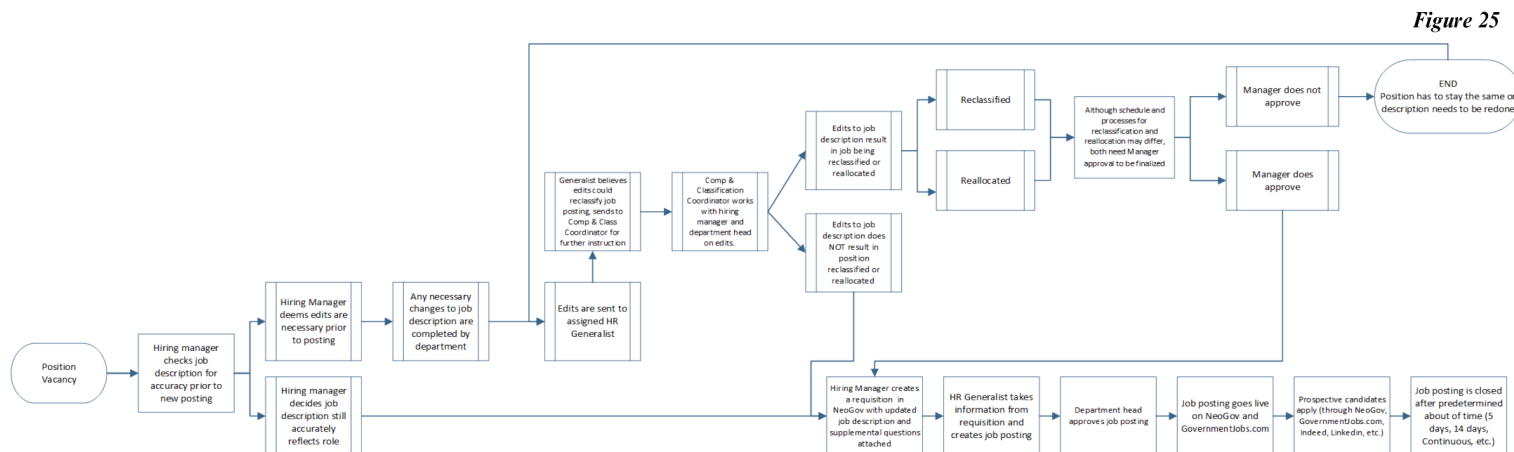
Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

- Recruitment efforts have been revamped to include a wider array of presence at job fairs, youth programs, and UGA events.
- Supported the Cadet Corps & Explorer Program, designed to cultivate a diverse, well-prepared, and community-focused workforce.

In examining the recruitment process, OA staff was cognizant of the nuances of local government. Among the items which are unique or amplified in hiring for local government are the inherent need for integrity in the hire process, both from a philosophical standpoint as well as the desire to avoid litigation. It is also generally accepted that individuals looking to pursue a career in public service often do so because of an intrinsic desire to serve a need within the community. This motivation may or may not lead to a willingness to make a trade-off in compensation. However, with regard to compensation, one must take into account that even if an employee puts a premium on public service as a career choice, competition among government agencies can be significant. (Further discussion on this topic can be found in the Comparative Analysis section of this report on page 15)

Finally, the budget structure of local government can create significant obstacles for recruitment. It is difficult for government entities to demonstrate the value of investment of employee recruitment to the voting public. Private industry has the ability to be agile in adjusting to job market shifts, and devote more resources as necessary when unemployment is low. Local governments are generally constrained to an annual budget and its relatively static nature insofar as being developed at least six-months prior to implementation, and being difficult and time-consuming to amend once approved by the governing body.

Recruitment Review & Process Workflow



The recruitment process, when carried out in its simplest form, requires the hiring manager to create a requisition in the NEOGOV software platform, which the department's designated HR Generalist will use to create a job posting on the GovernmentJobs.com website. Once posted to the website, potential employees can begin submitting applications for the duration of the job posting, which is generally approximately two weeks, although the department can post positions for as little as five business days, or have the position held open indefinitely with a "continuous" posting.

The process becomes more complex if the hiring manager wishes to make changes to the job description (JD). If this occurs, the hiring manager must send the edits of the JD to the HR Generalist prior to creating the requisition. The reason this is done is so that the HR Generalist can assure that the changes do not change the minimum qualifications for the job and/or create a situation in which the job classification, and in turn pay grade, would need to be changed. If the edited JD requires a change in pay grade, the change must be approved by the County Manager before the recruitment process can move forward.

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

If there are no edits to a JD, in theory the job could be posted the same day the requisition is submitted. However, allowing for the workload of HR staff, the posting will likely go live in 1-3 business days after the requisition is created. The process of editing a JD is estimated to add 5-10 business days, depending on the workload of the hiring manager, the HR Generalist, and the Compensation & Payroll Coordinator. If the job is reclassified or reallocated, additional time is necessary for the County Manager's approval and/or budget cycling

Once the job posting goes live to the public, recruitment goes into mostly a passive stage of allowing the NEOGOV software to accept and grade applications. After the posting closes, applications which meet minimum requirements are sent to the hiring manager for review. In the case of continuous postings, or at the request of the hiring manager, applications may be referred to the hiring manager prior to the posting's closing date. The HR Generalist may also review any applications (upon request) which did not meet minimum requirements according to NEOGOV's screening. In the case of such a request, the Generalist will review all applications and refer those which appear to meet minimum requirements.

Advertising & Marketing

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines advertising as "...a business practice where a company pays to place its messaging or branding in a particular location." With the operative word being "pays," it is noteworthy that the ACCGov HR Department does not have funds budgeted for advertising, and therefore job postings would be considered announcements rather than advertising.

Current Jobs

Welcome to the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County employment application process!

- View a list of current ACCGov job opportunities online at www.governmentjobs.com/careers/athensclarke.
- To apply, simply create an account and complete the online application process!

[View current ACCGov job opportunities and apply online](#)

[Subscribe to Weekly Job Notices](#)



DRUG FREE
WORKPLACE



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
EMPLOYER



Verify



ACCOMMODATIONS
FOR DISABILITIES

Figure 26: Image of "Job Openings" tab on the HR webpage.

The AMA goes further to differentiate between advertising and marketing, with its definition of marketing being, "...a business practice that involves identifying, predicting and meeting customer needs." In the case of human capital recruiting, the customer can be defined as a potential employee. Furthermore, for a staffing entity, (which is the manner in which ACCGov's HR employees identify the department's role), the hiring department would also be considered a customer of the HR Department in the recruitment/hiring/orientation processes.

Job opportunity announcements are currently posted to the GovernmentJobs.com website, which is powered by NEOGOV and accessible on the accgov.com website (see Appendix A), as well as by internet search. HR Generalists also indicated that they can and do list certain job postings on some internet sites, free of charge.

OA staff conducted testing of search engines to identify the availability of ACCGov postings using search terms "jobs Athens GA" and "government jobs Athens GA." The terms were either entered outright, in the case of search engines (Google, Microsoft Bing, and Yahoo), or as filters on searchable sites (CareerBuilder, Glassdoor, Indeed.com, Monster, Simply Hired, Snagajob, and ZipRecruiter). When searching for "jobs" in Athens, GA only, none of the searches yielded results in the top 10. When searching "government jobs" in Athens GA, six of the platforms yielded results in the top five, with one platform (Bing) yielding a #1 result. Neither Monster nor Snagajob appeared to have any ACCGov listings upon advanced search. When searching specifically on the GovernmentJobs.com website, the software platform which ACCGov HR uses for its applicant management, out of the first 10 results when searching "jobs in Athens, GA," 40% were for ACCGov.

HR Generalists noted that they posted some job announcements on certain government-specific sites such as the Georgia Local Government Access Marketplace. A search of this site yielded one result for ACCGov (at the time there were 48 job postings on the ACCGov site.) Also, usually in the case of director- or assistant-director-level

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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

positions, the Manager's Office will pay to have positions advertised in applicable professional association listings. Otherwise, the departments themselves are responsible for further marketing. Several departments, notably those of public safety and Leisure Services, tend to have robust employment marketing campaigns in social media, and the Police Department hosts its own jobs website, accpdcareers.com. The Public Information Office will also be involved in job postings, creating listings in social media and on ACCTV Government Access Channel (Cable Channel 180.)

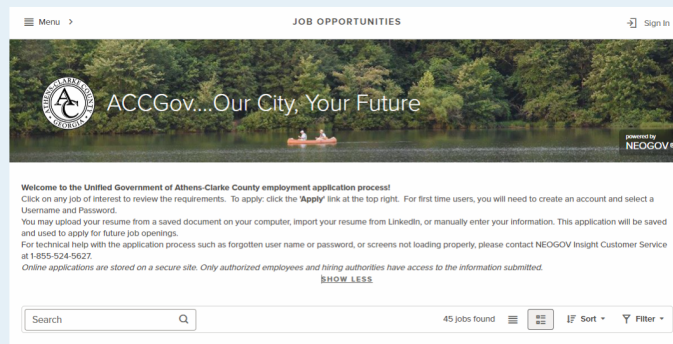


Figure 27: Image of ACCGov's job opening webpage on GovernmentJobs.com

Beyond digital advertising, as noted in job descriptions for HR Employment Generalist and Senior Generalist, HR staff does attend job fairs on a limited basis. Those who had attended these events expressed that they were generally not successful in yielding a significant number of qualified candidates, one major reason being that all ACCGov full-time jobs require a high school diploma, so attending job fairs at the high schools, where the students have not yet graduated, did not yield qualified candidates. The same issue translates to college job fairs, since most candidates are working toward a bachelor's degree and, having not yet earned it, would not be eligible for positions with that requirement. In some instances, although the presence of ACCGov might be useful simply for visibility, there were other ACCGov departments setting up their own booths at the job fairs, so the presence of HR as a general employer may have been superfluous.

Internally, a job posting link is sent via "World" email once per week, with a link to the accgov.com job postings page, as well as an attachment titled Openings.pdf. The attachment lists the job title, salary and closing date for the posting. The most recent such document as of this report included 50 jobs listed, 38 of which did not have a closing date but instead were listed as "Continuous Applications." See Appendix B for a copy of the email, the linked landing page, and the attachment.

Several Human Resources staff, across divisions and job capacities, noted a lack of a defined marketing initiative and employer branding as a barrier to recruiting strong candidates. Leadership indicated that funding had been requested for employer brand development and implementation in prior budgets, but had not been funded. In the course of Comparative Analysis, differences in approach to employer brand logos was noteworthy. (Appendix E)

Job Descriptions--Recruitment

The following are duties found in the job descriptions of HR Staff which OA has identified as being directly involved in the recruitment process:

HR Director:

- Oversees the recruitment and retention program for the government.

Employment and Employee Relations Administrator:

- Oversees the day-to-day activities of personnel assigned to recruit and hire employees, testing and assessment, job analysis, and various other human resources related functions.
- Plans, develops, coordinates, and implements recruitment programs to staff all ACC departments, divisions and offices, for personnel system positions (merit) and for non-personnel system positions (non-merit) as appropriate and/or as requested.
- Plans and administers the employment programs and procedures which involve recruitment, placement, assessment and testing, internal transfer, and promotional processes; ensures certification functions are carried out efficiently and effectively.

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HRIS Developer:

- Establishes, maintains and implements strategies, goals and objectives in order to ensure the successful and accurate administration of payroll, benefits, recruiting, onboarding, time and attendance and other related human resource systems functions.
- Assists in the development and maintenance of organizational policies related to payroll, benefits, recruiting, onboarding, time and attendance and other related human resource systems functions.

Compensation and Payroll Administrator:

- Engages in strategic activities to meet ACCGov needs in work force planning and compensation to maintain market competitiveness in employee recruitment, retention and reward.
- Studies work force trends to include benchmarking, ACCGov turnover rates, vacancy rates, and market conditions. Proactively develops strategic solutions for short and long-term ACCGov needs.

HR Generalist, when assigned to DEI Workforce Generalist:

- Builds and strategically distributes job advertisements that showcase ACCGov's wide variety of career opportunities and total compensation; our organizational values; and the current diversity of employees already enjoying success with ACCGov.

HR Generalist, when assigned to Employment:

- Conducts the full scope of recruitment utilizing automated software for vacant positions to include: advertising, screening, interviewing, applicant skills testing and coordination of pre-employment evaluations per job description requirements.
- Consults with assigned departments to identify recruitment needs and provides expertise on candidate sourcing, applicant skills testing, and ACC process and procedure prior to job posting.
- Consults with assigned departments for detailed review of job descriptions; the development of screening questions; and establishment of advertised work schedule and pay range prior to posting.
- Develops and reviews supplemental questionnaires and interview questions
- Participates in job fairs and community service functions.

Senior Human Resources Generalist, when assigned to Employment:

- Conducts the full scope of recruitment for vacant positions to include: advertising, screening, interviewing, applicant skills testing and coordination of pre-employment evaluations per job description requirements.
- Consults with assigned departments to identify recruitment needs and provides expertise on candidate sourcing, applicant skills testing, and ACC process and procedure prior to job posting.
- Consults with assigned departments for detailed review of job descriptions; the development of screening questions; and establishment of advertised work schedule and pay range prior to posting.
- Develops and reviews vacancy notices, supplemental questionnaires and interview questions.
- Applies law, policy and procedure consistently to ensure the equal opportunity of all applicants and employees.
- Participates in job fairs and community service functions.

Sample Job Posting - Recruitment

During the course of this Audit, OA staff followed four job postings in order to see how the recruitment/hiring/orientation practices played out for actual job vacancies. Those four positions were as follows:

1

**Animal Services:
Animal Control Officer**

2

**Leisure Services:
Program Leader**

3

**Manager's Office:
Capital Projects
Administrator**

4

**Superior Court:
Alternative Dispute
Resolution Coordinator**



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Insofar as the recruitment phase of these job postings, only the Leisure Services' posting followed a standard timeline. That is, the job description did not go through any updates, so once the requisition was created the posting went live, and a sufficient number of qualified candidates were referred to the department for review.

From the time the request was initiated by the department until the qualified applications were referred to the department was 30 calendar days, or 20 business days. There were 29 applications out of 39 received which were referred to the department as meeting minimum qualifications.

In the case of the Animal Services listing, the request was initiated and approved by the Department Director on the same day, and the job was posted two days later. The qualified applications were sent to the department 16 calendar days (11 business days) later and two candidates were interviewed but neither were hired, so the posting was reopened. The working title of the job was changed to "Animal Services Officer" upon relisting. The second posting took 14 calendar days (10 business days) and none of the four candidates interviewed were hired. The job was reposted once again, this time with the process lasting 15 calendar days (11 business days). At the time of this writing, four candidates had been chosen for interviews from the latest posting. In a total of the three job postings, 39 of 51 applications were referred to the department as meeting minimum qualifications.

Postings for positions in the Manager's Office, such as the Capital Projects Administrator/SPLOST Program Administrator are generally handled by the HR Employment Administrator instead of an HR Generalist, so there are some dissimilarities when comparing with other postings. In the case of this particular posting there were some changes to the job description, but not to pay grade. From the time the request was initiated until the first referral of applicants was 20 calendar days, or 14 business days. The posting was closed 13 calendar days after the first referral of applications, but was reopened and made to be a "continuous" listing the following day. Information indicates 13 of 18 applications were referred as meeting minimum qualifications. A conditional offer was made to a candidate 65 calendar days (46 business days) after the posting was made continuous.

For the purposes of this audit, OA began tracking the Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator position on 1/25/24. However, the request to fill the position was originally made on 7/14/23, and the position had been previously posted twice (July and Sept. of 2023) without a hire. The job was then reposted on 1/12/24 with a closing date of 2/1/24. Two days prior to the closing date, 16 out of 33 submitted applications were referred to the hiring manager, and three additional applications were referred the day after the job posting closed.

The ratio of applications referred to departments as meeting minimum qualifications among all four postings studied was 97/141, or 69%. The posting for Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator yielded the lowest percentage at 49%, while the remaining three postings had between 70-76% application referrals.

Recruitment Analysis

The review of the recruitment practices of the Human Resources Department yielded the following points of significance:

- There appears to be a lack of consistency in expectations between HR and the hiring departments, as demonstrated in some of the following analysis comments. In researching the history of ACCGov unification, it was found that the former Clarke County and City of Athens government had distinctly different models for what were called then Personnel Departments. In the City of Athens, recruitment was completely decentralized, with the departments having significant autonomy in terms of personnel procedures. For the County, on the other hand, Personnel Services was a division of the department of General Services, which took a much more centralized approach to human resources functions. It appears as though these different approaches have never been fully reconciled.

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- Seven positions were identified within the HR Department whose job descriptions include tasks involved in recruiting. In the course of the audit, however, OA staff was unable to discern specific, intentional recruitment planning and initiatives on the part of HR. The general consensus among HR staff implies that their function is staffing, not recruiting.
- OA staff found that not all hiring managers were aware of the need to send an edited job description, using Microsoft Word's "Track Changes" feature, to the HR Generalist in advance of creating the requisition. This lack of clarity can lead to delays in the start of the recruitment process.
- Some hiring managers and departments appear to be aware of and proactive regarding their own ability to engage in recruiting, while others apparently are either unaware or do not have the tools and resources to engage in recruiting on their own. It should be noted, however, that within the "Purpose of Job" statement of the HR Assistant Director's job description is included, "...coordinating activities of human resources administration, employment/recruitment..." Furthermore, the HR Director has listed among job duties, "Oversees the recruitment and retention program for the government." When conducting interviews and research regarding the inconsistencies in recruitment practices, OA observed that the primary barriers to active, intentional recruitment on the part of HR were the various other projects and priorities placed upon their time and resources.
- The NEOGOV software used by HR to screen applications appears to be a powerful tool, and most departments surveyed are satisfied in using it. However, there is significant skepticism as to whether the screening process is being used to its greatest potential. Research into the process and interviews with department hiring managers, as well as meetings with representatives of the software company itself, tended to show a lack of understanding from both HR Generalists and department hiring managers as to how best optimize the features of NEOGOV for applicant screening.
- The "Supplemental Questions" feature is an area of particular concern. These questions, which a department can add to the application process, can be either multiple choice or text. It is apparently not common knowledge among hiring managers and HR Generalists that these questions can "make or break" an applicant's chances of getting through the referral process. This is particularly concerning with the multiple-choice questions. An applicant might, for example, accidentally click an incorrect answer (e.g. "1-2 years experience" vs. "2-5 years experience") and be tagged as not meeting minimum qualifications. Also concerning is the way such questions can be open to interpretation. For example, many job descriptions (if not the vast majority) have minimum qualifications which included a statement that an applicant may qualify with "...any equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities for this job." This portion of the job listing helps ensure that enthusiastic, interested potential employees, who may not have a traditional career trajectory, are encouraged to apply for jobs which may have certain requirements to discourage them. However, the Supplemental Questions mentioned above may disqualify even the most talented and committed candidate, although that person might very well have exactly the "equivalent...education, training and experience..." to perform at a high level within that position.

Grounds Worker I

Salary	\$32,448.00 Annually	Location	Athens, GA
Job Type	Full Time	Job Number	2024-0802
Department	Central Services	Opening Date	01/11/2024
Closing Date	Continuous		

	DESCRIPTION	BENEFITS	QUESTIONS
*01	Which best describes your highest level of education? Some High School High School diploma or GED from an institution accredited by SACS Some education beyond high school Technical or Vocational Degree Associate Degree Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Degree		
*02	How much landscape maintenance or general outdoor work experience do you have? No experience Less than six months of experience At least six months but less than one year At least one year but less than two years At least two years but less than four years At least four years but less than six years At least six years but less than eight years At least eight years but less than ten years Ten or more years experience		
*03	What type of Driver's License do you possess? None Class C--Regular Class CP--Learner's Permit Class D--Regular Provisional Class E--Emergency Vehicle Non CDL Class F--Emergency Vehicle CDL Class EP & FP--Permit Class M--Motorcycle Class MP--Motorcycle Learner's Permit Class A CDL Class AP--CDL Permit Class B CDL Class BP CDL Permit Class C CDL Other		

Figure 28: Image of the supplemental questions for the Grounds Worker I position.



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- In a tight job market, time is of the essence. The research done by OA staff indicates there are several steps in the recruitment process in which a sense of urgency is lacking. These include but are not limited to:
 - Job description updates: Hiring managers, when well connected to department operations, should anticipate changes to job descriptions and have updates prepared in advance of positions vacancies.
 - Application referrals: It is unclear as to why the default procedure is for the HR Generalist to wait until the job posting is closed to refer qualified applicants to the hiring manager. EEOC concerns were mentioned in this respect, but it would seem that allowing hiring managers to review applications in real-time, and even reach out to “superstar” candidates as soon as possible would translate into more successful hire rates.
 - Perspective: The HR Department, as well as most hiring managers, tend to measure turn-around time for activities such as hiring in “business days.” However, given the fact that digital platforms are available 24-hours a day, seven days a week, recruitment time can be interpreted as more than four times as long for the candidate as it does for the potential employer (168 hours in a full week vs. a 40 hour work week).

Hiring

While a simple, non-technical definition of “hiring” is to “employ for pay,” in terms of Human Resources, hiring refers to the specific activity of selecting a candidate from a field of submitted applications and preparing the successful candidate to begin work.

“Hiring refers to the specific activity of selecting a candidate from a field of submitted applications and preparing the successful candidate to begin work”

For the purposes of this audit, the hiring process begins when the applications which have been screened by NEOGOV software are either referred to the hiring manager, not referred because they did not meet minimum qualifications, or referred to the hiring manager after manual review of the HR Generalist. The hiring process is complete when the new employee reports for the first day of work.

There may be some overlap among the processes of recruitment, hiring and orientation—both insofar as timeline and actual processes. Some of the places in which hiring and recruitment may overlap are as follows: 1) Depending on the arrangement between the hiring manager and the department, applications may be referred while the job posting remains open, and 2) In the case of “continuous” postings, recruitment is ongoing simultaneously with the hiring process for the duration of the posting, or, 3) A similar situation occurs in the case of mass hiring for part-time positions, such as Leisure Services seasonal employees or Elections Office’s poll workers.

Regarding orientation, there are many steps of the process which must be done so that the new employee meets all policy requirements for employment, but some of these may be handled on, during or after the employee’s first day of work. For example, tax forms and other legal paperwork are generally completed on the first day of work, along with such orientation tasks as being issued equipment, attaining access to work-related software and reviewing policies and procedures.

The hiring process is the most intricate of the processes of recruitment/hiring/and orientation, in that it involves the participation of the new employee, the hiring manager, the HR Generalist, the HR Compensation & Payroll Division and IT, as well as third-party entities when background checks and other pre-employment

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screenings are required, such as drug testing, psychological screening, etc. Additional steps may be necessary for internal candidates, and/or when a request for salary above the listed amount is made for the final candidate. Reference checks are another step in the hiring process. If a circumstance arises in which a candidate is deemed ineligible during the hiring process, or if the candidate withdraws, the entire process may be started again.

Hiring Review & Process Workflow

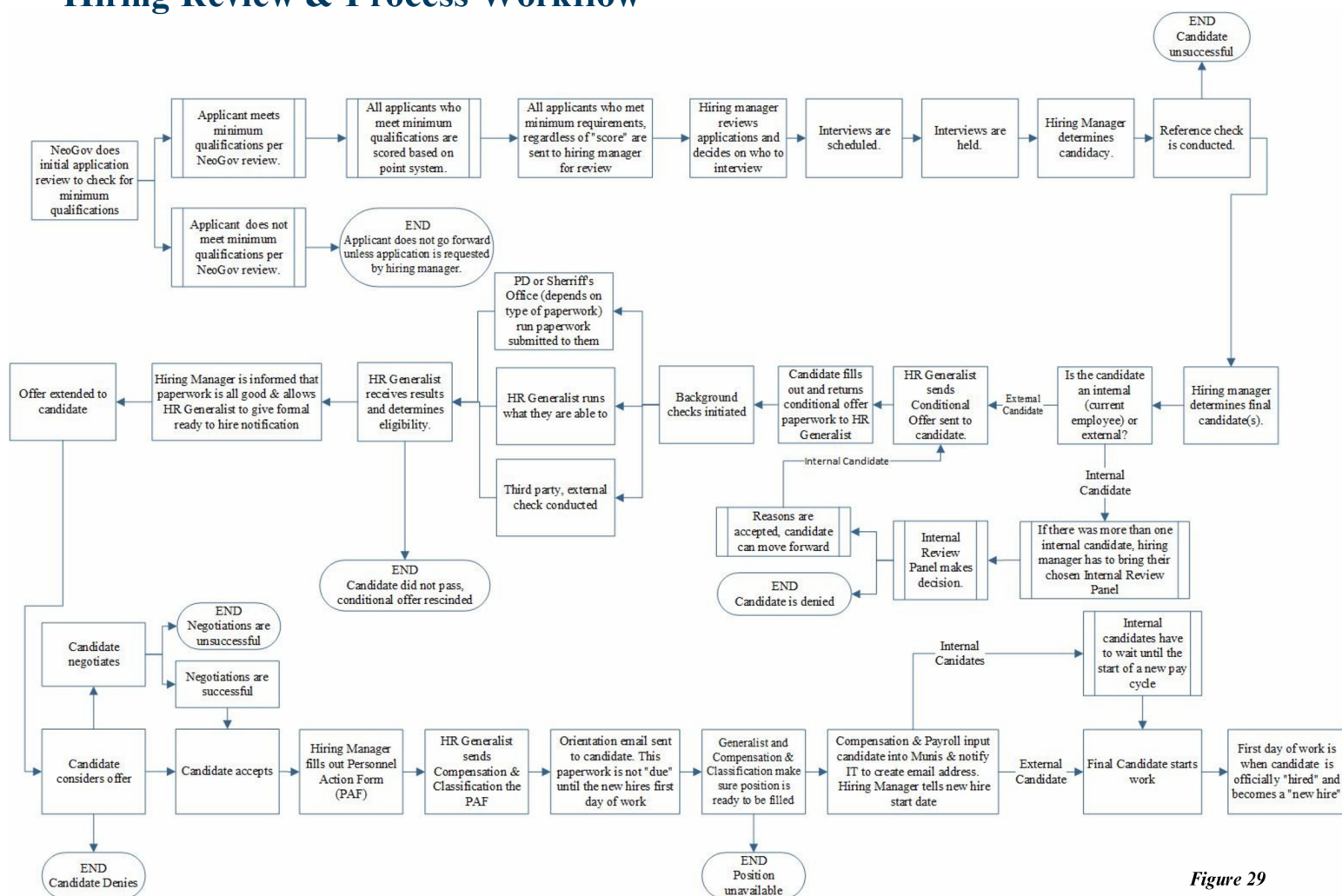


Figure 29

Once applications are sent from the HR Department to the hiring manager, the hiring process begins. The hiring manager will review the referred applications and decide upon which candidates to interview, if any. At times there are no qualified candidates who apply, or the candidates who meet minimum qualifications are not acceptable to the hiring manager on the face of the application. For example, an applicant for a Planner II position may meet the minimum requirements of a bachelor's degree in forestry, but only have experience in rural agriculture and no experience in urban planning, in which case a hiring manager might deem the candidate not a worthwhile interviewee. If there is not an acceptable pool of candidates for interviews, the job can be reposted, with or without modifications to the job description or job title. According to the Employment Division of HR, it is acceptable to post a job under the working title instead of the formal job description title. To extend the Planner II example, it's possible this position could be reposted as "Arborist."

Once a field of qualified applicants are identified for interviews, that portion of the process begins. Interviews are generally conducted at the direction of the hiring manager in coordination with the assigned HR Generalist. However, certain departments and offices conduct interviews without an HR Generalist present. In the case of the



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departments who fall under the Personnel System, there should be an HR Generalist present in the interview, or an approved department head or staff member who has undergone the Legal & Effective Interviewing course conducted by HR, as well as observation of interviewing skills after completion of the course. There are also chartered offices and departments under the leadership of elected officials who are not required to have HR representatives present in interviews, but they are encouraged to do so.

Typically, upon selecting interviewees, the hiring manager will coordinate with the HR Generalist in order to:

1. Schedule interviews: This includes securing a location and scheduling with all involved parties
2. Develop appropriate questions: The hiring manager develops a list of questions which will be asked of all candidates. The HR Generalists reviews the questions to assure they are appropriate for the job description, and recommends changes as necessary

Interviews may include only the hiring manager and HR Generalist, or other panel members as selected by the hiring manager. During the interview, the HR Generalist (or other approved representative) will monitor the discussion to assure there are no violations of Equal Employment Opportunity policy. Potential violations may occur either from the interviewers or applicant. For example, if a job requires working overnight, an interviewer could ask, “Are you okay working alone late at night as a woman?” in which case the Generalist might remind the interviewer that gender is not a factor. Similarly, the candidate might volunteer information such as, “I don’t think my wife and kids will care if I work late,” in which case the Generalist would let the candidate know that family status is not a subject to be taken into account during the interview.

Once interviews are complete the hiring manager may or may not select a candidate for a conditional offer. If none of the candidates is extended an offer, the hiring manager may select additional candidates from the field of qualified applications, or reopen the job posting, with the latter case being more common. If that is the case, the entire process begins anew.

If a candidate is selected to receive a conditional offer, the hiring manager notifies the HR Generalist who extends the offer through the NEOGOV platform. The offer contains the job name, the amount of the salary being offered, and up to three attachments to be completed and returned within two business days in order to initiate the background check process. (Appendix M) In conjunction with the offer being extended, the hiring manager must contact three references to assure there are no “red flags” in the candidate’s history.

Once the conditional offer is extended, the candidate may accept the offer and return the required forms, request an increased salary, reject the offer, or choose not to reply within the required timeframe. In either of the two latter cases, the recruiting process will again go back to selection of another candidate, either from the current submissions or by reposting the position. If the candidate accepts the offer and returns the paperwork in a timely manner, the hiring process continues until the candidate becomes an employee and reports for their first day.

Job Descriptions--Hiring

The following are duties found in the job descriptions of HR staff which OA has identified as being directly involved in the hiring process:

Employment & Employee Relations Administrator:

- Oversees the day-to-day activities of personnel assigned to recruit and hire employees, testing and assessment, job analysis, and various other human resources related functions.
- Plans and administers the employment programs and procedures which involve recruitment, placement, assessment and testing, internal transfer, and promotional processes; ensures certification functions are carried out efficiently and effectively.

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Figure 30

Compensation and Payroll Administrator:

- Provides oversight of reorganizations, reallocations, and reclassifications, above entry rate salary requests, and the integrity of the classification system.

Payroll Specialist:

- Receives bi-weekly and monthly payroll time sheets and personnel action forms; audits time sheets and personnel action forms; audits time sheets for accuracy and prepares payroll-change sheets for changes not handled by personnel action forms.
- Processes the New Hire Report bi-weekly for the State reporting to child support agencies.

Human Resources Generalist, when assigned to Employment:

- Analyzes criminal history and employment application information per applicable law, ordinance, policy and procedure for qualifying and disqualifying factors.
- Participates in the development and delivery of employment related training for the Unified Government.
- Develops and maintains detailed and appropriate documentation of potential employment violations and liability matters.
- Coordinates development and retention of necessary and sufficient documentation of employment decisions.
- Obtains reference checks, motor vehicle records, and criminal histories of prospective employees.
- Administers promotional testing for public safety positions.

Senior Human Resources Generalist, when assigned to Employment:

- Analyzes criminal history and employment application information per applicable law, ordinance, policy and procedure for qualifying and disqualifying factors.
- Identifies sources of potential violation of EEO law, principles, and of ACC ordinance, process and procedure. Problem solves to find a workable solution and appropriately communicates these to the Employment Administrator in a timely manner.
- Develops and maintains detailed and appropriate documentation of potential employment practices liability matters.
- Obtains reference checks, motor vehicle records, and criminal histories of prospective employees.

Sample Job Posting - Hiring

During the course of this Audit, OA staff followed four job postings in order to see how the R/H/O process transpired. Of the four, two were filled: Leisure Services Program Leader and Capital Projects Administrator.

The Animal Control Officer position had been posted once, which resulted in two interviews and no hire. It was then reposted as “Animal Services Officer.” Four applicants were interviewed, and two were extended conditional offers that did not result in hire. As of the time of this report, the position had been posted for a third time and four candidates were in interview status.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Coordinator position was put on hold for a time, due to the fact that two of the candidates selected for interviews were also being interviewed for another opening, also within the office of Superior Court. When the process was resumed, a final candidate was chosen who was allowed to shadow in the office, and then meet with judges. The final status is unknown at the time of the writing of this report.



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Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two



Hiring Analysis

The review of the hiring practices of the Human Resources Department yielded the following points of significance:

- OA staff research and interviews revealed a lack of intentional, formalized training for departmental hiring managers. Hiring managers seem to have ad hoc training via supervisors and colleagues, some written materials if requested from HR, or back-and-forth emails with HR staff.
- Hiring practices vary greatly among departments, either by choice of the hiring department (or chartered office, elected office, etc.), or due to specific requirements of the position. For example, public safety and other safety-sensitive positions require testing and extensive background checks which other positions would not. Currently HR Generalists are assigned to various departments by the Employment & Employee Relations Administrator, who strives to equalize the workload among the Coordinator and four Generalists (some of whom are Senior Generalists by virtue of the career ladder).
- Larger departments tend to be consistently in “hiring mode” and are well-acquainted with the intricacies of the process. Those departments often have hiring managers and administrative support to see the process through. Smaller departments, in general, need much more guidance from HR staff throughout the process.
- The hiring process can be very easily delayed due to the back and forth nature of salary negotiations. There does not seem to be a set timeline that hiring managers are able to give the prospective candidate due to the complexities of the process.

Orientation

According to the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), new hire orientation “...is a formal event to introduce the new employee to the organization's structure, vision, mission and values; review the employee handbook and highlight major policies; complete required employee paperwork; review pertinent administrative procedures; and provide mandatory training. This process can overload a new employee with information and is therefore best done over a few days or a week, if possible.”ⁱ

The same source mentions that, “Onboarding is often confused with orientation. While orientation is necessary for completing paperwork and other routine tasks, onboarding is a comprehensive process involving management and other employees and can last up to 12-months.”

The scope of this comprehensive audit included orientation as well as onboarding topics. In order to analyze the orientation process, OA staff has drawn from an extensive list provided by SHRM, which categorizes the components of orientation as follows:

- Introduction to the company
- New-employee paperwork
- Benefits and compensation
- Administrative procedures
- Key policy review
- Introduction and tours

Prior to significant shifts in procedures due to the Covid-19 state of emergency measures, ACCGov new hire orientation was held over the course of an eight-hour workday at the training room of the Satula Building, where HR is housed. During this time full-time employees had their benefits outlined and explained, as well as other components of traditional orientation for organization-wide policies and practices. Part-time employees were required only to attend the portion of the session regarding the policies and practices, as the benefits portion did not apply. These orientations were held at least monthly, but discontinued with the pandemic lockdowns.

ⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/tools/toolkits/understanding-employee-onboarding>

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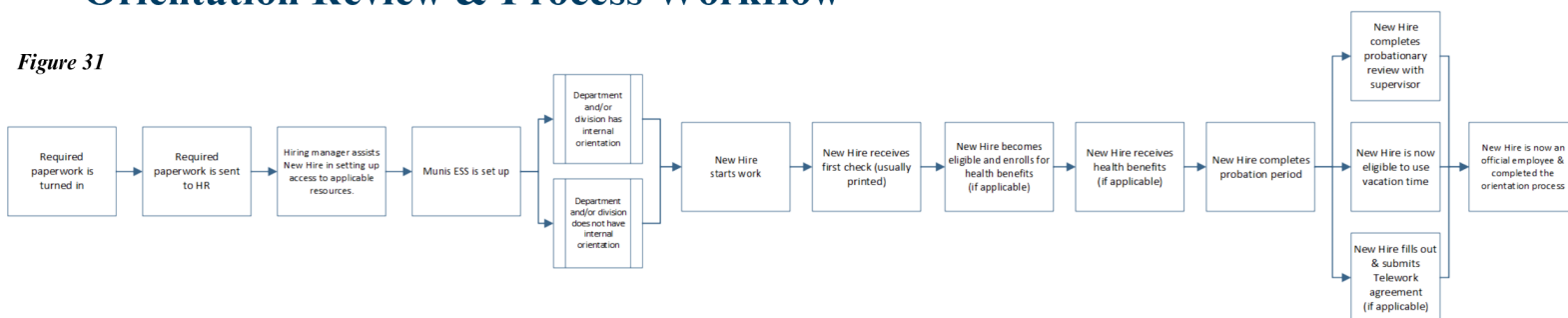
Since April of 2023 a “New Hire Meet and Greet” has been held six times, although a seventh was scheduled but canceled due to low attendance. An invitation is sent out via world email. (Appendix D) The email for the initial event specified “This is an ‘optional’ event for new hires. Attendance is encouraged, but not required. This is NOT new hire orientation!” This statement was not included in subsequent email announcements of the event.

While new employees are at the event, they have the opportunity to meet other new employees as well as representatives from the following departments and organizations:

- Manager’s Office
- Human Resources: Benefits, Compensation, Employment, Safety & Risk, and Wellness
- Corebridge Financial
- Employee Charity Drive
- Blood Drives
- Employee Emergency Assistance Fund
- Toastmasters Club
- Solid Waste - Recycling Division
- Leisure Services
- Organization Development
- Inclusion Office

Orientation Review & Process Workflow

Figure 31



During the pandemic lockdowns, HR moved to an online orientation procedure, which is still in use as of this audit. A candidate who accepts a job offer is sent an email (Appendix C) with instructions on beginning work. This email, when printed from Microsoft Outlook using standard settings is approximately 2.5 pages, and includes eight attachments. One attachment is a 12-page document describing insurance benefits, and the remaining seven attachments are forms which are to be completed and returned to HR via the hiring department. Of the remaining seven attachments to be filled out by the new hire, three are federal/state required employment forms and four are ACCGov-specific forms titled as follows:

- EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLICIES 2018
- UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY VOLUNTARY SELF IDENTIFICATION PREFERENCE
- Employee Direct Deposit Authorization Form
- ACCGov Employee ID Card Application

The email contains a one-paragraph welcome statement, and lets the new hire know that the hiring department “will...reach out to you in the next couple of days to determine your official start date.” The email is then divided into three titled sections.

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The initial section is titled “Your First Day at Work.” This section lets the employee know which documents will need to be completed on the first day of work, and the proof of identification which is required. It also gives a brief statement saying “We are all here to support you” and to “let us know what you need to accomplish your new responsibilities.”

The second section titled “Onboarding and New Hire Orientation for ALL” asks the employee to complete the application form for an Employee ID Card, and lists an email address and fax number for submitting the form. There is also a telephone number listed to contact HR in order to have a photo taken for the ID, if the new hire does not submit one with the application. This section of the email also contains a link to a one-hour and forty-eight-minute YouTube video titled “Athens-Clarke County: Part Time New Hire Orientation.” with instructions on how to view the video, and noting “You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies as of condition of employment...” Although this video is titled for part-time employees, the video is applicable and sent to both full-time and part-time employees.

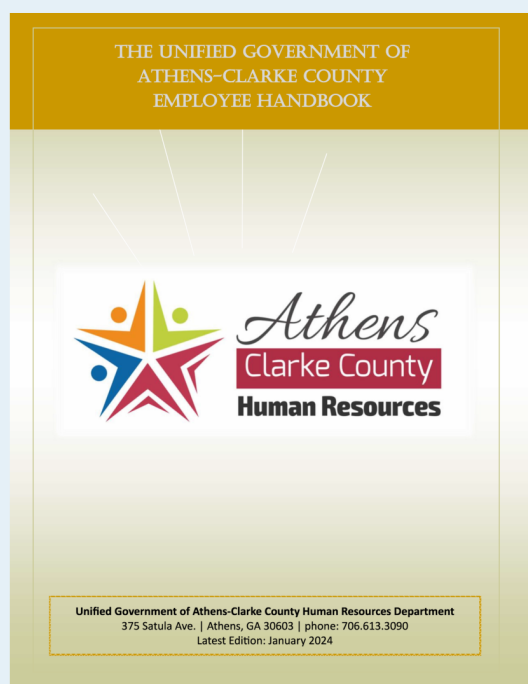


Figure 32: Image of the cover of the 2024 ACCGov Employee Handbook

There are also links to the “Personnel System of the ACCGov Municode” and “2024 Employee Handbook,” again noting it is the employee’s responsibility to know and abide by these procedures. There are also instructions on completing the Defensive Driving and Discrimination & Harassment trainings, for which the new employee must have an ACCGov email address in order to view. This section points to an attached “policy acknowledgement document,” along with instructions to submit the form to the departmental Administrative Assistant during the first week of employment.

The third section of the email called “Immediate Action Required for Full-Time Employees” is addressed specifically to full-time employees, and tells the employee that a representative of the Benefits Division will be in touch in order to complete benefits enrollment. A link to the benefits program is included with the caveat that it will be activated upon enrollment. There is also a sentence encouraging enrollment in the Wellness Program. A telephone number is listed for assistance.

Job Descriptions - Orientation

The following are duties found in the job descriptions of HR Staff which OA has identified as being directly involved in the orientation process:

Assistant Human Resources Director

- Oversees the new employee orientation program for Athens-Clarke County Government.

HRIS Developer:

- Establishes, maintains and implements strategies, goals and objectives in order to ensure the successful and accurate administration of payroll, benefits, recruiting, onboarding, time and attendance and other related human resource systems functions.
- Assists in the development and maintenance of organizational policies related to payroll, benefits, recruiting, onboarding, time and attendance and other related human resource systems functions.

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Human Resources Coordinator/Benefits

- Assists with the design, development, and hosting of new employee orientation. Develops, maintains and manages the benefits website contents.

Senior HR Generalist, when assigned to Benefits:

- Administers the self-insured health insurance programs including evaluating and analyzing the programs and contracts, instructing, counseling, educating and assisting employees and new hires regarding use, problems, changes and enrollments. Ensures compliance with contract provisions and federal regulations.
- Designs, develops, and conducts new employee orientation.

Senior HR Generalist, when assigned to Employment

- Coordinates and processes new employee documentation related to employment.

Human Resources Generalist, when assigned to Benefits

- Designs, develops, and conducts new employee orientation.

Human Resources Generalist, when assigned to Employment

- Coordinates and processes new employee documentation related to employment.

New Hire Meet & Greet



Figure 33: Image of one of the 2024 New Hire Meet & Greet events.

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, the orientation process has become a nearly entire online process with new hires directing themselves through the onboarding process.

Currently, the only in-person portion of the orientation process is the New Hire Meet & Greet (NHMG), which is put on by the Benefits Division of the HR Department. There is currently a push from the Manager's Office to make this the mandatory "orientation" for all recent hires to ensure everyone who has recently joined the organization feels both welcomed and oriented to the organization.

The NHMG happens every other month and takes approximately three hours to welcome new hires to the organization while also notifying them of the benefits they receive as an ACCGov employee. While at the event that takes place at the Lyndon House, new hires sit and watch a slideshow presented by the Benefits & Wellness Administrator.

The presentation is split into two sections: the first describes Athens-Clarke County as both a community and as an employer, while the second introduces the new hires to the Human Resources Department.

The event itself begins with an overview of the area, explaining the community. During the first half of the event, numerous departments and offices from across the government send representatives to the event to introduce them and their services to the new hires. Those offices and departments include the Manager's Office, Inclusion Office, Leisure Services Department, Public Information Office and Solid Waste Department. New hires are able to hear about services and other opportunities offered to them throughout other government offices.

ANALYSIS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Two

At the conclusion of the first segment, the final portion of the event is centered around introducing the Human Resources Department and their services to the new hires. During the HR portion of the event, the focus is not on the traditional benefits offered at a job, but rather an introduction to HR staff, who to contact in HR with certain questions and the other “perks” new hires receive as an ACCGov employee.

Unlike the previous method of new hire orientation, new hires do not sign up or receive guidance about signing up for their insurance at this event. That process has moved online and happens on the first day of the month following a full month of employment. New hires are told to direct any questions to the Benefits and Wellness Division if there are any questions at the time of registering for insurance.

It is important to note that the Meet & Greet is not a replacement for the previous orientation. This event is used as another point of the orientation process for the new hire, with the majority of the other elements being found in an online format.

Sample Job Postings - Orientation

During this audit, OA staff followed four sample job postings throughout the process of employee recruitment, hiring and orientation. At the time of this report, one of these four resulted in a new hire. Because employee orientation is currently handled via an email sent to the new hire, it was not possible for OA staff to observe the process directly.

However, it was reported by the HR Generalist assigned to that department, Leisure Services, that the newly hired Program Leader was completing all orientation processes in a timely manner and had attended a New Hire Meet & Greet.

Orientation Analysis

The review of the orientation practices organized by the Human Resources Department yielded the following points of significance:

- Since the November 2023 New Hire Meet & Greet, OA Staff has observed an average of 14 new hires in attendance at each event.
- While there has been a push to make this event mandatory for all new hires, it seems as if there is a disconnect on this requirement between the organizers and supervisors throughout the government.
- There have also been numerous departments and offices absent from the event although they were slotted to present. Their absence resulted in the event organizers having to present on behalf of those departments or offices last minute.
- It is unclear to OA staff if this event is voluntary or mandatory for new hires and presenters.
- Clear, organizational mentorship through the orientation and onboarding process seems to be nonexistent.
- At the time of the report, there are no scheduled milestones related to required forms, classes, benefits, etc.



Figure 34:
Image of both
the cover and
HR overview
slides shown as
apart of the
presentation
given the 2024
New Hire Meet
and Greet

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

After careful research and analysis of the objective(s), as through consideration of the defined scope, the Office of Operational Analysis believes there are six findings of significant note that should be addressed in reasonable time. The issues observed are described and accompanied by potential recommendations for improvement or resolution. Subsequently, any response to the findings and recommendation is listed, as provided by the department head and/or county management.



Finding One

Recruitment/hiring/orientation software is not being used to its fullest capacity



Observation

Throughout the course of the comprehensive audit, OA staff found instances in which hiring managers and HR Generalists, as well as HR leadership, were not fully aware of, or fully trained, in order to use optimally the functions of the software purchased for recruitment and hiring at a cost of approximately \$49,000 annually. Upon further research, OA staff learned that the software vendor offers a full suite of software products which can facilitate, enhance, and provide data regarding recruitment, hiring, development, performance, documents & workflows, policies & compliance, and employee information. (Appendix I) ACCGov currently uses at least six different software vendors and platforms for these functions including: NEOGOV, SharePoint, Take Aim LMS, Performance Pro, Munis, Civic Plus and the Microsoft Office suite. It is likely more efficient for the HRIS (Human Resources Information Systems) Developer to effectively manage information if the majority of these functions were integrated into a single software platform



Recommendation

1. Invest in targeted, formalized and required training for HR staff and hiring managers regarding NEOGOV to assure optimal use of applicant screening features. (See Appendix H for example of mandated, organization-wide training.)
2. Consider purchase of additional NEOGOV modules, particularly for orientation/onboarding and document management. Importantly, NEOGOV software can be integrated with Laserfiche software, already used by HR for document storage.
3. For retention purposes, consider also purchasing NEOGOV employee landing page and performance review modules. NEOGOV is specifically designed for the public sector and therefore can be agile in addressing unique structures in local government, such as the public safety departments.
4. Investigate a single user-friendly “employee experience” platform. While the current vendor, NEOGOV, offers all such features, investigation should be made to ascertain the best platform for ACCGov. It is recommended that the above-mentioned functions be consolidated so that efficiencies and economies of scale can be utilized. See further discussion of this topic under Finding #6.
5. Consider investing in individualized, professional training/consulting services offered by NEOGOV. Current cost is \$325/hr. Maximize return on investment for such training by establishing SMART goals in advance.



Response

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Partially Agree: HR has provided NEOGOV training to hiring managers and any other employees involved in the hiring process since the inception of the NEOGOV applicant tracking system in 2014; additionally, HR also provides Legal and Effective Interview Training (LEIT). These trainings have been provided no less than once quarterly outside of the Covid-19 pandemic timeframe. One-on-one training was offered during the pandemic as needed. HR recognizes that ACCGov has a very new workforce overall (650 new hires in FY24 to date), and many are new supervisors. Ongoing training with supervisors is important, and HR is currently working on supervisor training for many other processes within HR (FMLA, Claims, 1st report of injury, worker’s compensation and others). There are other

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Recruitment/hiring/orientation software is not being used to its fullest capacity



Finding One



Response

government-wide trainings that need to be scheduled on an on-going and annual/semi-annual basis as well to include the Discrimination and Harassment Policy and supervisory level training related to multiple HR processes. With the loss of leadership, some HR staff began carrying multiple responsibilities/positions, which has slowed momentum. With the recent hire in May 2024 of one part-time position and one full time position (the vacant employment generalist assigned to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion [DEI]), this work has restarted. HR is currently working with Organizational Development (OD) to incorporate numerous trainings into the Learning Management System (LMS) for employees and supervisors, which will include NEOGOV and LEIT training follow-up modules.

2. Partially Agree: HR purchased the NEOGOV onboarding and offboarding module in December 2019 and worked with NEOGOV to create the platform for ACCGov. Within the first year, the decision was made to move to the Munis ERP, which boasted an Onboarding and Offboarding platform that was included in the system package. In an effort to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, the NEOGOV platform was discontinued. To date, HR has not yet begun the setup of Onboarding and Offboarding with Munis due to the numerous issues with the ERP system; however, to bridge the gap, staff have been building an onboarding/welcome package in Sharepoint and putting all new hire policies into the LMS, so completion of the module is able to be tracked. Since NEOGOV can be integrated with Munis, there are many advantages to having all of the platforms (applicant tracking, onboarding, performance, learn, offboarding) that need to “talk with each other” within the same system; however this will require a M&C-approved budgetary outlay, an RFP process if funding is approved, and dedicated staff time to build out each platform while also maintaining current programs and processes. Staff would anticipate requesting an additional position to manage these platform build-outs and monitor/update the platforms on an ongoing basis. At this time, HR would recommend that staff build out Onboarding and Offboarding in Munis as planned. Other platforms in NEOGOV may be reviewed for consideration at a later time.
3. Disagree: Munis offers the landing page and was the reason HR ended the contract for Onboarding with NEOGOV in 2021. The Performance Review system (PerPro) is currently housed in Organizational Development and is set for an interface update in July 2024. PerPro was introduced to the organization two years ago. HR believes it would be unnecessarily disruptive to the organization to stop that system, rebuild another system, and retrain the entire organization.
4. Disagree: See #3 above. In addition, multi-module software suites can be an amalgamation of different products with varying effectiveness. While staff would agree with the efficiency of a single platform, there may be some functionality lost in the pursuit of a single user interface.
5. Agree: HR recognizes the need to secure individualized, professional training/consulting services offered by NEOGOV especially in regard to reporting functions if M&C agree to funding.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Recruitment/hiring/orientation software is not being used to its fullest capacity

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

(1) Invest in targeted, formalized and required training for HR staff and hiring managers regarding NEOGOV to assure optimal use of applicant screening features. HR will develop a formalized NEOGOV training for HR staff related to applicant screening features and will develop and provide to the organization an ongoing training plan for NEOGOV and Legal & Effective Interview Training for hiring managers and other staff who use the system. Staff will publish this training schedule annually beginning no later than January 1, 2025.

(2-4) HR will build out the Onboarding and Offboarding in Munis beginning January 2025 for completion no later than April 1, 2025, and review other NEOGOV platforms for consideration in the future.

(5) HR will secure individualized, professional training/consulting services offered by NEOGOV upon funding by M&C. The addition of a position would provide bandwidth to not only work on the implementation of the Onboarding and Offboarding in Munis but to also provide ongoing system updates to the NEOGOV applicant tracking platform and staff training on updates.



Finding One



Response

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices



Finding Two

During the comprehensive performance audit, a theme of inconsistency was recognized regarding R/H/O practices among departments and HR Generalists and leadership. The nature of local government lends itself to such inconsistencies, due to the diversity of the workforce. However, it would create a more efficient and effective process if standard procedures were established, clarified and shared, with deviations from that process being rare, and only under prescribed circumstances.



Observation

Establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) and training programs for HR Generalists and hiring managers to eliminate back-and-forth discussion regarding R/H/O processes. Courses should be facilitated by training professionals and attended by both hiring managers and HR Generalists, so that roles and expectations in the R/H/O are clearly defined. SOPs should be established so that “If...Then...” scenarios are standard; that is, if a certain situation is encountered, then both the hiring manager and the HR Generalist understand how to proceed.



Recommendation

Below are some particular scenarios OA has identified in which such SOPs would be helpful.

1. Create an intentional recruitment strategy, with defined roles for HR and hiring departments. Through independent research, comparative analysis and interviews, OA has discerned a theme: successful recruitment is highly specialized. Different techniques are necessary to successfully recruit the best candidates for, as examples, a Sheriff's Deputy, a Department Director, an Administrative Assistant, or a part-time summer Lifeguard. It does not do justice to list only these four examples; with 43 departments and offices, and 613 job descriptions, the differences in position types and applicant pools can only be imagined. Nevertheless, it should be recognized that HR professionals have expertise in the general area of recruitment, while hiring managers and department directors have institutional knowledge in specialized fields, and of potential workers in those areas. A strategy should be designed cooperatively between HR and the hiring department, for each position, so that once a vacancy occurs, both HR and the hiring department understand how to proceed with recruitment.
2. Do not send automatic rejection letters to applicants/candidates until a final offer is accepted. There are many reasons a conditional offer may not end up with a hire. If it does not, it is much simpler and efficient to “go down the list” of applicants and extend an offer to a second or third choice candidate than to begin the entire job posting process over again. Therefore, the recommendation is, “If a conditional offer has not been finalized, then do not send rejection notices to other applicants/candidates.”
3. Allow hiring managers the choice of viewing all applications, if they so desire. The number of applications received for any given position varies widely. In the four position postings followed by OA during this audit, the number of applications varied from 12 to 39 applicants. Research and interviews revealed that some postings, mostly continuous postings, receive very few or no applicants each week. On the other hand, some postings such as Administrative Assistant positions, can receive several dozen or more than a hundred applications within the posting period. It seems logical to add a single step in the recruitment process whereby a hiring manager can check a box instructing the HR Generalist to send over all applications, regardless of the NEOGOV screening process. This could allow hiring managers, especially regarding hard-to-fill vacancies, the opportunity to contact candidates expeditiously.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices



Finding Two



Response

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Disagree: By definition, which the audit report sources from SHRM, recruiting is “the activity of **identifying and soliciting individuals** – either from within or outside an organization – to fill job vacancies or staff for growth.” According to Law Insider, **Solicit for Employment** means, with respect to any Person, to solicit, induce, persuade or entice (by written, oral or any other means) a second Person to (a) reduce, impair or terminate their employment, consulting or similar relationship with a third Person or (b) enter into an employment, consulting or similar relationship with the first Person. “Solicitation for Employment” shall have a corresponding meaning.

The employment team serves as hiring liaisons for ACCGov departments. This role has never been recruitment in that HR staff does not actively identify nor solicit individuals to fill job vacancies. This has been in an effort to support ACCGov’s commitment to being an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE), whereby HR staff provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability (physical or mental), gender, age, sexual orientation, genetic information or parental status. EOE means that, as employers, staff must consider all applicants equally. When an employer actively identifies and solicits individuals there may be higher risk for biases, especially unconscious/implicit biases, even for HR professionals and hiring managers. While HR has not actively identified and solicited individuals for positions, employment staff has consistently participated in career fairs, outside of the pandemic. At these career fairs, attendees are encouraged to visit the ACCGov website and apply for positions of interest. Should the organization decide to move to a recruitment focus, HR would be willing to discuss next steps, but, for the purposes of this audit, this is not currently an HR practice.

There is a tool present in the NEOGOV system whereby departments detail how they would like their job posted – the requisition (attached). Hiring managers within each Department complete the requisition to inform HR of their hiring needs for a specific position to include, but not limited to, the following:

- the date they would like the position posted,
- how long they want to post it,
- the use of use a “working title” to better define the position if needed,
- the number of vacancies in the position,
- who the hiring managers will be,
- requested changes to the job description,
- requests for job skill testing,
- request for external advertising providing approved budget and preferred advertising locations,
- position specific questions to be added to supplemental questions, and
- a section to add an attachment with further instructions.

The requisition is covered in detail in the NEOGOV training, and process charts are provided to everyone who uses the NEOGOV system (attached).

2. Disagree: The only automatic rejection letters sent to applicants are for those applications that do not meet the minimum requirements for the position. In an effort to provide timely customer service, HR staff send these notices, so applicants are not left waiting for an indefinite period to learn they have not

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Two



Response

Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices

met the minimum requirements, as departments vary in how long it takes to complete the hiring process. Sometimes this results in an applicant letting HR staff know they may have accidentally/mistakenly marked something incorrectly. When this occurs, not only does HR staff manually review that application, but based on findings, they may then review ALL rejected applications for similar situations.

For applications that have been referred to the hiring manager, if a candidate has been interviewed, and the hiring manager has decided not to make an offer to that candidate, HR staff send the notification in order to provide the best customer service to applicants who have oftentimes already applied to numerous places and are anxiously awaiting feedback. When a candidate has been selected, the hiring manager will move all other candidates to “rejected” as they are not being further considered. Once HR staff receive the conditional offer paperwork back from the candidate of choice, staff consider this as the candidate accepting the position. At that time, all other notifications are sent to provide timely customer service for those who have been waiting through the entire process at this point and have had no further communication. When an applicant or candidate is anxiously waiting to hear back about their application, even a 30-day window to hire can feel like an eternity if they have not received any updates.

3. Disagree: In Section 1-9-4 (c) – Employment of the ACC Ordinance, it states, “Disqualification of applicants. The personnel director or a designee may reject any application or exclude the name of any applicant from the eligibility list or deny certification of any eligible applicant who: (1) Does not possess the minimum entry requirements for the position for which the application is made...” Per Ordinance, HR is responsible for determining which applications are qualified based on the minimum requirements for a position. As such, allowing hiring managers to view all applications would violate this ordinance if the applications do not meet minimum requirements. If hiring managers would like to begin receiving applications after the “5 working day” requirement of ordinance, there is a comment box on the requisition where they could make that request. However, HR will need to incorporate this change into the training for hiring managers to ensure they understand they are still responsible for reviewing ALL applications that are received through the end of the posting and providing legitimate, defensible reasons for not selecting all other candidates for hire. (Section 1-9-4 (a) *Notification of available positions*. The personnel director or a designee shall release recruitment notices and adequate publicity to obtain the necessary number of qualified applicants for employment. Notice of all vacant positions should be posted at least five (5) working days in the personnel department and all other departments and other locations designated by the personnel director.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

While HR disagrees with this finding as a whole, staff will ensure that, no later than October 1, 2024, all hiring managers have received notification that they may use the comment box of the NEOGOV requisition to indicate requests to begin receiving applications after the ordinance required 5 working days. This information will be added to NEOGOV training and process flow charts (see Appendix K).

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Three

R/H/O practices of the HR Department are not data-driven



Observation

Examples include the fact that HR Generalists use their own independent spreadsheets for tracking applications and interviews, while the paid software vendor indicates there are up to 95 standard report templates available for tracking. During research and fieldwork, OA found sparse evidence that data points were actively used to track performance metrics. It is the professional opinion of OA staff that HR could benefit greatly by tracking performance through data analysis and goal-driven metrics. While data, and subsequently metrics, are merely tools in a toolbox for creating successful outcomes, their importance cannot be overstated. For example, as stated above regarding recruitment, if there is a goal for the number of applicants for any given position, then HR staff and hiring departments can identify ebbs and flows in applicant pools and proactively address labor shortages (and/or abundances.)



Recommendation

1. Implement a data driven dashboard. A hallmark of ACCGov is transparency. Raw data is one of the simplest ways to assure community and colleagues can be apprised of the workings of each department. A data driven dashboard would not only help other departments and the public at large understand the complexities of the HR Department functions as whole, and R/H/O processes in particular, but can also help keep department hiring managers and HR Employment Generalists on track regarding R/H/O goals.
2. Institute SMART goals for R/H/O practices; work collaboratively with department hiring managers to achieve goals. Examples would include, “Assure at least 20 applications, with at least 15 to meet minimum qualifications, within 12 calendar days of posting Building Services Supervisor position, with conditional offer extended within 10 business days of job posting closing.” Data can be used from this type of goal in order to analyze and adjust recruiting efforts. Some caution, however, should be used in assuring measures do not create adverse, forced results in terms of data and specific goals. That is, data and SMART goals should enhance consistency and communication in the R/H/O process. In the example above, for instance, a procedure could be put into place “If 20 applications are not received within 12 calendar days, then the posting will be extended for five calendar days, and all applications sent to hiring manager.”



Response

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Agree: Generalist spreadsheets are for their personal use to track the hiring process for each of the candidates who have been given a conditional offer. NEOGOV does not track this information. HR provides data for the ACCGov Strategic Plan under Goal Area: Develop strategies to recruit, reward and retain high performing employees, both internally and externally including individuals coming out of the justice system. This includes a total of 23 milestones under four different initiatives. Data provided for the strategic plan notably includes number of applications received, percentages of applicant acceptance of final offer of employment, time to hire in days, and overall turnover with target of less than 12%. HR also provides employee demographic data to the Office of Inclusion.

HR agrees that it is necessary for staff to re-evaluate strategic goals not only as part of the overall ACCGov strategic plan but also within HR. While there exist 23 different milestones within the ACCGov strategic plan, staff report data on less than ten (10) of them. Efforts to build a dedicated web page to provide tools, information, and employment-specific data have been fruitless, because staff have been unable to dedicate time to this endeavor due to high work volume and employee turnover.

2. Partially Agree: HR works with 43 different ACCGov departments. Each of these departments are

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Three



Response

R/H/O practices of the HR Department are not data-driven

decentralized as mentioned in the audit, and not all follow NEOGOV hiring processes, especially if their employees are non-merit. While HR has not used specific performance metrics with departments for preferred number of applications or time to conditional offer, HR Generalists are consistently working with hiring managers on efforts toward obtaining a healthy number of applications for each posting. These efforts include placing external ads at the request of the department, reviewing applications totals before postings close and discussing whether extension of the posting is warranted, determining if ads need to be placed in additional external sites, and exchanging calls/emails to check on status of hiring process especially after interviews have been held. Where departments are agreeable to begin utilizing SMART goals for the hiring process, HR will work with NEOGOV to see if this could be added to the requisition where departments already outline their job posting preferences for HR. Because the hiring process is a shared responsibility between HR and the department, it would need to be a collaborative, agreed upon change to be effective.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

- (1) HR management team (interim positions and administrators) will meet no later than August 1, 2024 to review the FY25 ACCGov Strategic Plan and establish consistent data-driven goals to address the current initiatives and milestones.
- (2) HR will survey hiring managers and Department Directors to determine if there is agreement to move toward MART goals for the hiring process. If departments agree, HR will work with NEOGOV to have a section for these measures added to the requisition. The survey will go out no later than end of October 2024 and results will be provided no later than December 31, 2024.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Lack of flexibility and agility in recruitment and hiring, especially regarding local workforce

Within Athens-Clarke County, during 2024, there were a total of nearly 800 high-school graduates, and over 7,000 college and technical school graduates. The current recruitment process has few opportunities for capturing these potential long-term employees early in their job search. The high school diploma or college degree requirement means that people working toward these milestones can get overlooked as potential employees. For example, a college senior well-qualified for a position in the Central Services Department will likely begin a job search during the last semester of college. However, all jobs within that department which require a bachelor's degree would perceive this applicant as not qualified, even being a few months shy of that degree. Other employers, especially in the private sector, may display flexibility and acknowledge the fact that the candidate is in the process of completing the degree requirements.

1. Look into skills-based assessments for certain positions rather than degree requirements. According to SHRM, the states of Maryland, Utah, Alaska and Pennsylvania have eliminated degree requirements, and a significant portion of HR professionals value skills-based assessments, with 78% of those surveyed saying the quality of hires has improved with such assessments, and 23% saying the diversity of new hires has increased with the use of skills-based assessments.
2. Remove high school diploma requirement for certain positions and instead implement training programs for basic skills and advancement capabilities. In other words, hire employees who display enthusiasm, commitment and work ethic, and then provide training for advancement. Local government work provides unique challenges and opportunities; the diversity of jobs can be challenging insofar as standard recruiting practices. However, it can also offer the opportunity to provide entry-level positions which can lead to advancement, if an intentional strategy is in place.
3. Allow applications to be submitted for more than one position. For example, a statement might be created that says, "I agree to have my application considered for other positions for which I meet minimum qualifications within ACCGov for up to six-months. I will be notified if my application is forwarded for consideration of other positions." If done systematically and without violation of EEOC practices, this could broaden the pool of applicants for many positions. This is particularly appealing when one takes into account the premium some applicants put upon the health insurance and retirement benefits offered by ACCGov. Not every applicant is searching for a job that will be the primary household income. If ACCGov creates an avenue whereby an applicant who has already displayed interest in the organization can be considered for more than one position, the chance of successful employment increases with each new position considered.
4. Consider accepting paper applications, or, have HR Generalists make field visits to accept applications for certain departments. Many departments employ workers who will accept a job offer quickly if available, and the online-only application process can be a barrier. In order to circumvent this barrier, OA staff recommends that the HR Department either create a process whereby paper applications can be accepted, or facilitate a system whereby HR Generalists avail themselves to help facilitate the digital process at different locations around the county. For example, when the Central Services Department has a Grounds Worker I position open with "continuous" applications being accepted, they could either accept paper applications, have a kiosk open in their own facility and assist with digital applications, or have an HR Generalist visit the facility on a regular basis to facilitate the application process.
5. Related to Recommendation #2 within this same finding, is a recommendation that HR intentionally and deliberately work with local high schools and colleges/universities to create a "pipeline" of talent. An example can be found in Appendix G, in which Macon-Bibb County has established a formal agreement with the Bibb County School District to establish apprenticeship programs and thereby train potential employees for jobs directly upon graduation from high school. Similar agreements seemingly could be established with local colleges and universities.



Finding Four



Observation



Recommendation

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Lack of flexibility and agility in recruitment and hiring, especially regarding local workforce.

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Agree: As part of the M&C approved pay study for the Unified Pay Table, the vendor contract includes the charge to review all of the job descriptions for that table. Because the job descriptions are defined by the Department Directors along with HR Compensation professionals, Segal (pay study vendor) will help determine if skills-based assessments are appropriate for any positions.
2. Agree: See #1 above.
3. Disagree: While NEOGOV is designed to allow for applications to be copied from one posting to another, this process does not allow the applicant to answer the supplemental questions provided by the department on the later posting. This means that a manual review by a HR Employment Generalist would be required for every application that is copied to another posting. The NEOGOV system was purchased in part to remove the need for manual review outside of exception, as it is extremely time-consuming and is an inefficient bottleneck. Furthermore, NEOGOV already creates a master profile for each applicant, which means the applicant does not have to re-enter their work history, education history, personal information for each new application they submit. The applicant only needs to update information that has changed since they last submitted an application and answer the supplemental questions specific to the new job for which they are applying.
4. Partially Agree: HR currently accepts paper applications for specific positions. ACCGov Great Promise Partnership (GPP) students and college interns all submit paper applications. Non-merit departments that do not utilize the NEOGOV system also submit paper applications for their candidate of hire. These processes are submitting ONLY the paper application of the candidate who is hired for the position, not all applications from a job vacancy search. On the HR webpage, there is a section for "Application Support" which contains the locations, addresses, hours of operation and description of the assistance provided for those wishing to submit applications for job vacancies:

There are several locations within Athens-Clarke County that provide internet access and assistance with Athens-Clarke County online applications:

Agency	Address	Hours	Description
Human Resources Department, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government	375 Satula Avenue Athens, GA 30601 706-613-3090	Mon – Fri 8am – 5pm	Human Resources Department has work stations and assistance available for completing online applications.
Goodwill East Athens Store and Career Center	4070 Lexington Road Athens, GA 30605 706-395-1560	Mon-Wed 9am - 5pm Thurs 9am - 7pm Fri 9am - 4pm Sat 10am - 2pm	Goodwill offers job seekers application assistance and free use of computers with Internet access and résumé writing software.
Athens Regional Library System	2025 Baxter St Athens, GA 30606 706-613-3650	Mon - Thurs 9am – 9pm Fri – Sat 9am – 6pm Sun 2pm – 6pm	Each of the branches in the Athens Regional Library System has computers available for public use. For all locations and hours, please visit: http://www.athenslibrary.org/locations
Athens Career Center, GA Department of Labor	Athens Career Center, GA Department of Labor 150 Evelyn Circle Neely Drive Athens, GA 30601 706-583-2550	Mon – Fri 8am – 4pm	Free Internet and resume writer access computers are on site. The Career Center offers a full range of jobseeker and employer services.

It would be inefficient for HR Generalists to place themselves at departments across ACCGov and wait for potential applicants to arrive to complete job applications. However, if individual departments would like to set up a kiosk in their departments and assign someone to assist applicants, HR will work with the department to train those employees.



Finding Four



Response

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

Lack of flexibility and agility in recruitment and hiring, especially regarding local workforce.



Finding Four



Response

5. Agree: ACCGov already supports both GPP and UGA internships. The GPP program was initiated by M&C in FY17 beginning with two (2) students; since then, the program has grown to 15 students (FY24) supported by eight (8) different ACCGov departments. One GPP student was hired with ACCGov in 2020 and two more have been hired in 2024. Additionally, HR has been working collaboratively with the Corrections Department on the Returning Resident Program which should be an agenda item for M&C from Corrections no later than August 2024.

HR agrees that we could work more closely with local high schools and colleges/universities to create a “pipeline” of talent. This would require M&C approval and department’s collaboration to create apprentice positions in order for this to be successful.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

(1-2) Job description review is already within the contract for the Unified Plan Table Pay Study. This study is slated to begin in July 2024 with completion date of December 2025.

(4) As part of the survey mentioned in Finding #3, actions to be taken, HR will add questions related to the placement of kiosks in departments to gauge the willingness and interest of the Department Director to allocate resources for their operation and management. If individual departments express interest, HR will work with them to train their employees on NEOGOV use.

(5) As part of the survey mentioned in Finding #3, Actions to be taken, HR will add questions related to apprentice positions to gauge which departments would have interest in developing an apprentice program. If there is a positive response from departments, HR will work with those identified to present an agenda item to the M&C for consideration of an apprentice program for the FY26 budget.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Five

Employee retention lacks defined goals.



Observation

The simplest way to avoid difficulties in the R/H/O process is to prevent position vacancies. Naturally, vacancies will occur due to retirement, relocation, or other circumstances beyond control of the employer. As noted in the comparative analysis, however, competition among employers within commuting distance of Athens-Clarke County is high. OA staff was unable to discern specific, data-driven goals regarding employee retention from the HR Department.



Recommendation

1. Set and measure retention goals. As mentioned in Finding #3, there is not a SMART goal and data-driven approach to HR practices. OA staff advocates the HR Department taking a proactive approach to employee retention, the first step of which would be to set specific, measurable goals.
2. Establish an employer brand. According to SHRM, “An employer brand is an important part of the employee value proposition and is essentially what the organization communicates as its identity to both potential and current employees. It encompasses an organization’s mission, values, culture and personality. A positive employer brand communicates that the organization is a good employer and a great place to work. Employer brand affects recruitment of new employees, retention and engagement of current employees, and the overall perception of the organization in the market.”^[i] It is the professional opinion of OA staff that the HR Department should be given funding and latitude to establish an employer brand for ACCGov.
3. Explore the possibility of a “HR Project Analyst/Manager” position to help with the implementation of initiatives across all divisions. The functions of the HR Department are disparate and often difficult to prioritize. Some functions have hard deadlines (meeting payroll and benefits timelines, budget preparation, etc.) while others are fluid and almost impossible to predict, as demonstrated by the agility necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A Project Analyst/Manager could help alleviate the “fire hose” effect that seemed pervasive among HR leadership. That is, among the Director, Assistant Director and Division Administrators a theme emerged that there were simply too many tasks assigned to the department to be able to handle all of them in an intentional and effective way. An HR Project Analyst/Manager position could be pivotal in assessing the workload of staff and prioritizing projects, as well as assuring projects are completed and followed up upon as necessary. In the long term such a position can assure continuity of HR functions, leading to greater employee retention.
4. Prioritize competitive health insurance cost. According to SHRM, 89% of employers ranked health-related benefits as most important to their employees. Retirement savings and planning benefits and leave benefits were ranked second.^[ii] In conjunction with prioritizing employee retention, as well as creating an employer brand, OA staff finds that health insurance, retirement benefits and leave program are of the utmost significance in recruiting and retaining employees. While other benefits are nice to have, it is the opinion of OA staff after the research and interviews conducted during the course of the audit that getting “back to the basics” of ensuring an excellent healthcare plan at a distinctly low cost to employees should be the first and foremost priority. This, in conjunction with excellent retirement and leave benefits can offset higher salaries offered by neighboring jurisdictions and other public- or private-sector employers.
5. Schedule regular updates of print and digital materials. Outdated materials can damage the integrity of ACCGov as an employer of choice. One such example is the link to a video titled “Onboarding New Hire Orientation Video” which is sent out with the orientation email. When one clicks on the link, it is actually a YouTube video entitled “Athens-Clarke County: Part Time New Hire Orientation.” Upon inquiry, OA

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Five

Employee retention lacks defined goals.



Recommendation

told this is the video sent out to all employees, whether they are full- or part-time, and the content is relevant to both. According to YouTube information the video is seven years old. The video is hosted by and includes references to several employees who no longer work with ACCGov. OA recommends that HR update all print and digital materials at least annually, and explore ways to make such materials “evergreen” for ease of updates.

6. Tailor the orientation program to individual department needs. Part of the beauty and challenge of local government is the diversity of jobs which it encompasses. Within OA research and interviews, there were vast and seemingly irreconcilable differences of opinions regarding employee orientation. Respondents in the HR Department itself, as well as hiring departments, had different opinions of the orientation procedures which have been implemented over the past several years. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, orientations were held monthly, in person, at the Satula Training Room. During the pandemic, an online orientation process was put into place. Respondents to inquiries regarding the change in process were nearly uniformly split in opinions: half preferred the in-person, day-long orientation while the other half said the online process was more efficient and effective. HR should offer both alternatives, and allow hiring departments to decide whether employees should have orientation via digital resources, or attend an in-person orientation.
7. Consider updates to reclassification and career ladder procedures. Again, the beauty and challenge of local government employment can often mean that there are few opportunities for advancement. Private industry, as well as other public-sector employers, generally tend to have more opportunities for advancement. In comparing ACCGov with the University of Georgia, for example, UGA employs nearly seven times as many workers as ACCGov. This naturally translates into more opportunities for advancement. In order to retain workers, ACCGov’s HR Department should explore ways to eliminate barriers to advancement. Currently, reclassification of a position can be a nearly year-long process, during which time a qualified, long-term employee can easily field and perhaps accept offers from other employers. A more expedient approach to advancement could lessen this risk.

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Partially agree: The Compensation Division currently conducts annual market research to determine appropriate requests for market, table, and performance increases for the upcoming fiscal year. Compensation also tracks full time vacancy and turnover rates quarterly (though it can be calculated per pay period if requested). In FY25 Compensation will begin tracking the following on a quarterly basis: (a) The number of interim appointments; (b) The total cost (and number) of referral bonuses distributed; (c) The total cost (and number) of hiring incentives distributed; that were distributed; and (d) The total number of promotions (to show internal professional development).

The Benefits Division has already developed a plan with Epic to help mitigate the increasing cost of health insurance benefits to better match our standing against other employers. Benefits also continually monitors all benefits costs managed by the Division and conducts research, upon request from employees, for additional programs that help mitigate costs for requested services. In FY25 Benefits will begin providing Total Compensation Statements to all employees. In addition, HR can begin tracking quarterly the total number of Wellness participants and the amount of HSA or salary credit they earned.

2. Agree: A capital line item (approximately \$100,000) for a Branding effort has been advanced from the Manager’s Office multiple times to the Mayor and Commission, but they have not approved that in the budget.



Response

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Five



Response

Employee retention lacks defined goals.

3. Agree: With three different pay studies to complete beginning July 2024, a 20% department vacancy rate which includes the Director and Assistant Director positions, the ongoing training of current HR staff who were hired within the past year, a conversion from a 28 day overtime cycle to a 14 day overtime cycle for all public safety departments, and an ongoing influx of Employee Relations matters, HR has already exceeded its capacity to absorb any additional initiatives or projects. Staff would agree that the addition of a HR Project Administrator position would help to meet the current needs as listed above; only as this list is diminished could that position assist with the work requested of within this report. To maximize the effectiveness of the role, HR staff recommend this position be created at the Administrator level to allow optimal collaboration across all divisions of HR.
4. Disagree: See #1 above. This effort is already in place. Benefits has developed a plan with Epic to help mitigate the increasing cost of health insurance benefits to better match ACCGov's standing against other employers. This plan, along with benchmarks, was shared during the FY25 Benefits Strategy & Renewal Discussion with M&C.
5. Agree: Staff are well aware of the inadequacies of the current onboarding process and are currently addressing these issues. As mentioned in Finding #1, Department Response, HR has recently added a part-time position (May 2024) and filled the vacant HR Generalist assigned to DEI position. These two positions are working closely together to build out a new welcome/onboarding and orientation platform which will also include an updated orientation video and updates to the HR web page and document center.
6. Disagree: Orientation serves the purpose of both introducing an employee to the benefits, policies, and expectations of ACCGov as well as introducing them to other employees of ACCGov. HR would not recommend removing one aspect of this experience for a digital only orientation. With the new platform mentioned in #5 above, a new hire may complete their onboarding and orientation materials within the digital platform, then attend the New Hire Meet and Greet (NHMG) for a more personal, group interaction with both new hires and representatives from several ACCGov Departments who provide services both to residents and employee alike. The Manager gave the directive to make attending the NHMG in person mandatory to help employees to engage and connect with one another, and hopefully the organization. It would be helpful if OA could provide examples of *"vast and seemingly irreconcilable difference of opinions regarding employee orientation."*
7. Agree: During the Unified Pay Table Pay Study, departments will have an opportunity to discuss creating career ladders within their departments. While reclassifications are tied to the budget process and thus occur annually in late summer, departments may take advantage of the reallocation process any time of the year.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Finding Five

Employee retention lacks defined goals.



Response

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

- (1) See Finding #3, action item #1.
- (2) HR is willing to be a part of this effort but does not agree that we should lead it.
- (3) If M&C agree to the addition of a HR Project Administrator position, HR will create a job description and prepare for posting no later than September 1, 2024 with plan to fill position no later than December 1, 2024.
- (5) HR work has been ongoing in this area and two position are currently assigned to this work. Expected completion of all areas of this update is currently set for January 1, 2024. If HR is required to begin work on branding, a survey for hiring managers, and the selection of a full-service system for hiring, onboarding, performance evaluations, learning management, etc., this deadline would need to be extended well into FY26.
- (7) Departments may be addressed during upcoming Unified pay study.

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

HR Department lacks cohesion and specificity of mission, goals and strategy, particularly in emphasizing employee recruitment and retention

As referenced in the Background section of this report, the current Human Resources Department for ACCGov has a history of more than thirty years since the unification of the City of Athens and Clarke County. It is the professional opinion of the OA staff that what is now the Human Resources Department of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County has been “playing catch-up” for three decades since it came into being with the merger of the two jurisdictions. That is, they have been given the near-impossible task of satisfying the promises that were made upon unification to employees of both the former city and county governments (some of whom are still employed), while attempting to recruit, hire and orient a 21st century workforce.

1. Explore and consider efficiencies that could be obtained by aligning software functions and/or services to the most appropriate, highest usage departments, and in simplifying processes. (e.g. PerPro, Take Aim LMS, Munis, NEOGOV, etc.) Goals should be set and prioritized for the use of software platforms to maximize ease of multi-platform integration and ability to collect and analyze data as needed by the HR department as well as the M&C’s Strategic Planning initiative.
2. Explore the possibility of changing the structure of the Employment & Employee Relations Division to comprise one coordinator who would serve both the Employee Relations and DEI functions, along with four HR Specialists positions to devote full duties to R/H/O, allowing these positions to be able to set SMART goals which they can intentionally, cohesively work to accomplish.
3. Emphasize, enhance and advertise the importance of employee benefits in recruitment and retention. This again entails the importance of a back-to-the-basics approach, identifying the most important benefits (generally the pension plan and affordable health benefits), set SMART goals related to employee satisfaction feedback (as gathered in 2023 survey) and build on those most important benefits to create a highly desirable, identifiable and marketable employer brand.
4. Use targeted recruiting techniques and data-driven strategies to recruit, hire and retain employees for positions which are hard to fill, either due to a shallow labor pool or steep competition for compensation. Abundant resources are available through SHRM and other professional, well-researched documentation to give guidance on such strategies.

DEPARTMENT / MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

1. Disagree: See Finding #1, response #3.
2. Disagree: Employee Relations (ER) is a subject that has not been addressed in much detail in this audit, although it is a significant part of the Employment Division’s responsibilities. The HR coordinator assigned to ER, who also serves as an Employment Generalist as part of the Employment Division, is the first point of contact for all employee relations issues to include grievances, appeals, Personnel Hearing Officer (PHO) hearings, discrimination, harassment, bullying, workplace harassment, code of conduct concerns, discipline, and others. This position conducts intake interviews, contacts and interviews other employees and other witnesses, obtains and consolidates evidence, conducts investigations as directed by the Manager’s Office, and documents all findings in a formalized report. The Employment and Employee Relations Administrator is responsible for other oversight of the ER process. This position is typically directly involved in Manager-approved investigations but also is responsible for the oversight of all employee relations matters. At the time this response was written, HR was working on three (3) full

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

HR Department lacks cohesion and specificity of mission, goals and strategy, particularly in emphasizing employee recruitment and retention

full administrative investigations involving three (3) separate ACCGov departments in addition to one (1) PHO hearing, and an average of ten (10) other matters to include discipline issues, reasonable accommodation requests, policy questions, and various complaints.

The Mayor & Commission funded the position of HR Generalist assigned to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in FY22. This position is tasked with driving DE&I efforts within the Employment Division to ensure that the ACCGov workforce fully represents the diversity of population within Athens-Clarke County, compiling and evaluating data to track DE&I initiatives through established metrics, building relationships and partnerships within the community, developing ongoing multi-media campaigns; a social media presence, and reviewing employment policies and practices affecting DE&I. Due to a vacancy caused by an internal promotion, HR has just filled this position with a new hire who joined HR in May 2024.

Because each of these positions have distinctly different roles, HR would not recommend combining them. When an ER matter presents in HR, it must be addressed immediately and cannot be placed on hold to respond to DEI duties. Additionally, ER investigations may take up to two (2) or more weeks to complete which would not allow for any DEI-related work to be accomplished during that time. Neither of these options would be in the best interest of ACCGov employees.

As mentioned in Finding #3, Action Item #1, the HR management team (interim positions and administrators) will meet to review the FY25 M&C Strategic Plan and assigned initiatives and milestones and establish consistent data-driven goals that will include DEI metrics.

3. Agree: Historically, HR has maintained the “Benefits” section/tab within each job posting on the ACCGov website since the inception of NEOGOV in 2014 (see below). This section could certainly be expanded to include small paragraphs of additional detail about the core benefits. Additionally, HR has developed a Benefits Brochure, that once printed, will be distributed at interviews.

As mentioned in Finding #3, Action Item #1, the HR management team (interim positions and administrators) will meet to review the FY25 M&C Strategic Plan and assigned initiatives and milestones and establish consistent data-driven goals that will include benefits metrics/SMART goals. (See Image at the end of Finding Six)

4. Partially Agree: As referenced above in Finding #3, HR will survey hiring managers/department heads who utilize NEOGOV to determine if there is agreement to move toward SMART goals for the hiring process. If departments agree, HR will work with NEOGOV to create a section in the requisition to address this.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

See Description of Action(s) for more information on implementation and any corresponding dates.



Finding Six



Response

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

HR Department lacks cohesion and specificity of mission, goals and strategy, particularly in emphasizing employee recruitment and retention

DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:

(3) HR will send Benefits Brochure to print no later than August 1, 2024.

As mentioned in Finding #3, Action Item #1, the HR management team (interim positions and administrators) will meet no later than August 1, 2024 to review the FY25 M&C Strategic Plan and assigned initiatives and milestones and establish consistent data-driven goals no later than September 1, 2024. HR will address DEI metrics at that time as well.

(4) As mentioned in Finding #3, Action Item #2, HR will survey hiring managers and Department Directors to determine if there is agreement to move toward SMART goals for the hiring process. If departments agree, HR will work with NEOGOV to have a section for these measures added to the requisition. The survey will go out no later than end of October 2024 and results will be provided no later than December 31, 2024.

Administrative Officer / Human Resources Specialist / Sheriff's Office

Salary
\$45,297.00 Annually

Location
Athens, GA

Job Type
Full Time

Job Number
2024-1501

Department
Sheriff

Division
Admin

Opening Date
06/19/2024

Closing Date
6/26/2024 11:59 PM Eastern

• DESCRIPTION BENEFITS QUESTIONS

Total compensation at the Unified Government includes a comprehensive set of benefits, a well-established culture of wellness, and a secure retirement that set us apart as a stable Employer of Choice where you can serve and make a difference in the community.

As an Employer of Choice, we offer:

- Health Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Pet Insurance
- Group Accident insurance
- Critical Illness insurance
- Employer paid basic life insurance
- Contributory term life insurance
- Whole life insurance
- Employer Paid Short Term Disability
- Long Term Disability
- Employee Assistance Program
- Paid Time Off
- 13 paid holidays
- Employer Paid Pension Plan (10 years of service)
- Deferred Compensation Program with employer match
- Tuition Reimbursement Program
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness Employer – Federal Student Aid
- Robust Wellness Program – earn up to \$175 per quarter for participation
- Employee Fitness Center – free for employees, spouse, and children 18+
- Free onsite health screenings (to include hearing, skin cancer, biometric screening, flu shots)
- Safety & Risk training and job-related vaccinations
- Uniforms provided
- Ongoing Training Opportunities and Career Development – Government Wide Learning Management System
- Discount Admissions – ACCGov Parks, Georgia Aquarium
- Annual employee appreciation events

BENEFITS
<http://www.accgov.com/434/Benefits>

WELLNESS
<http://www.accgov.com/wellness>

CAREER DEVELOPMENT
<http://www.accgov.com/index.aspx?mid=791>



Finding Six



Response



CONCLUSION

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



In alignment with the primary focus of the comprehensive performance audit (employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation), the Office of Operational Analysis offers the following closing remarks based upon points of interest or concern which, although do not warrant immediate attention, are worthy of consideration, potential status update, or future investigation. These highlights are in addition to, and not in place of, the formal findings and recommendations previously announced.

The topic of employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation was one of significant complexity, influenced by a variety of factors. To reiterate, this audit did not review or comment upon employee compensation, since that was outside the established scope, and is set to be undertaken by an external entity. With that in mind, the results of that separate study will undoubtedly have an effect on this very topic, from a recruitment and hiring standpoint, specifically. Furthermore, pay will also influence retention of the existing workforce, which is perhaps one of the key themes that came about in analysis of personnel challenges. Retaining the staff ACCGov already is the most efficient, effective, and practical way in which to avoid the pitfalls of prolonged vacancies.

In conversation with HR and upon review of information, it became clear that although there is no real method to guarantee the overall volume and quality of applicant pools with each job posting, confidence in standard processes and procedures can in turn influence the logistical aspects of each vacancy; therefore, at least making up for the difference in time which is not a luxury local government always has in attempt to deliver service to the community. When compounded with inconsistencies in application attractiveness, lack of established, sound internal controls is often the critical flaw for delayed fulfillment of positions.

In view of the immediate horizon, HR should continue its progress toward stabilizing the ACCGov workforce, while marketing itself in a way that promotes transparency and brings awareness to the critical role it plays within the organization. Full implementation of Munis ESS needs to be prioritized and completed in the coming months to avoid prolonged distraction of other, vital initiatives dependent upon it, or lacking focused attention because of it. Assistance with the impending Compensation Plan Study will undoubtedly occupy staff time, as will full installation of the Fire Department Collective Bargaining Agreement, and the “unknowns” yet to be experienced. To avoid a repeat of the prolonged challenges resulting from unification over 30-years ago, ACCGov must remain cautious of the current, similar pattern of attempting to manage multiple, unique systems of personnel developed in recent years that only further exacerbate H.R.’s goal of comprehensive R/H/O program. Examples of this conflicting direction include separate pay plans (General; Public Safety; Fire) and methods for hiring or recruitment distinct of specific departments, offices, and/or courts under elected or appointed leadership.

A common theme amongst ACCGov departments is just how stressed for space the organization is becoming considering natural growth of the government over decades. Although county leadership continues to be aware of and monitor the situation, it is increasingly clear that facilities play an integral role in our Human Resource Department’s operation and ability to conduct employee recruitment, hiring, and orientation at a high level. This is also applicable to our success in maintaining a professional workforce given the fact employees ultimately report to a physical location to perform their duties or interact with the public. It is difficult to “sell” ACCGov as a place to make a career if the facilities one is assigned to work from are not adequate in space or promote a conducive environment to concentrate, collaborate, and keep confidentiality due to overcrowding.

Even amidst considerable, recent turnover in departmental leadership, the Human Resources Department has been able to function accordingly during the interim, continuously seeing improvement in vacancy numbers from years’ past. During this time of fluctuation, but also as a daily norm, Division Administrators have assumed the HR Generalist positions, especially with regard to the Employment & Employee Relations Administrator. This is commendable, yet also an example of how strained for assistance the program is in carrying out its primary assignment(s).



CONCLUSION

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Staff are qualified, professional, and seemingly function well as a unit. This dynamic lends itself to future success in the employment realm, provided vulnerabilities are acknowledged, cross training is implemented, and continuity of operations can be sustained in times just as these. More so, HR must be given ample time to recover from years of additional, special projects assigned to them in an effort to refocus on existing priorities and daily responsibilities. Every new or expanded initiative takes time, and can simultaneously detract from providing the basic services the department is foundationally obligated to fulfill, or its very purpose for being. This may also switch emphasis from a reactive state of operations to one, in time, of proactiveness and confidence to take on new tasks knowing core duties are performed thoroughly without risk or interruption.

Department / Management Comment / Response

Many thanks to the Internal Auditor and OA staff for the patience, flexibility and grace extended to HR staff in regard to multiple transitions during the HR audit. It was a pleasure to work with you and your team.

As mentioned in the audit, understanding HR's work can be complicated not only due to the complexities caused by the personnel system (where some departments and/or employees don't fall under that system) but also by the breadth and depth of the different types of services HR oversees that all, in some manner, impact recruitment, hiring, orientation, and retention.

- ACCGov personnel budget
- Compensation studies and market studies that currently spread across eight (8) different pay tables
- Biweekly, monthly, and retiree payroll processing
- Above salary hire requests
- Career ladder management
- Position reallocations and reclassifications
- ACCGov department reorganizations (recommendations and guidance)
- Self-funded health insurance
- Family medical leave oversight
- Retirees and retirement programs
- A robust wellness program
- Deferred compensation and pension plan oversight
- Hiring (postings, interviews, pre-employment evaluations)
- Great Promise Partnership (GPP) program participation with the Clarke-County School District
- Internship opportunities through UGA
- Assessment centers for public safety promotional processes
- Employee relations support for all employees
- Administrative investigations
- Disciplinary actions under the personnel system (written reprimands, suspensions terminations)
- Performance improvement plan assistance
- Grievances, appeals, and personnel hearing officer processes
- Fit for duty and temporary alternative assignments
- Worker's compensation claims processing
- Contracts (soon to transition to Americans with Disabilities oversight)
- All accident, injury, property, exposure, and casualty claims
- Open records request processing
- Anniversary pins and retirement awards (management)
- EEO claims and other lawsuits (collaboration with Attorney's Office)
- HR Information Systems data and analytics.

CONCLUSION

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four

HR staff is extremely hard working and professional, yet 45% of HR employees have been in their current position less than two (2) years, 36% less than one (1) year and 19% less than six (6) months (see chart below). With the recent loss of the top two leadership positions, HR has had a 20% vacancy since February 2024. The Employment & Employee Relations Administrator currently covers the duties of the HR Director through interim appointment, and the Compensation & Payroll Administrator currently covers the duties of the Assistant HR Director through interim appointment. HR has a full-time vacancy in both Safety & Risk and Benefits & Wellness divisions.

<u># employees</u>	<u>time in position</u>	<u>percentage of total staff</u>
6	less than 6 months	19%
5	less than one year	36%
3	less than 2 years	45%
Administrators	time in position	
Benefits	less than one year	
Compensation	1.5 years	
Employment	8 years	
Risk	less than 3 years	
Employment & Employee Relations Team	time in position	
Administrator	8 years	
Sr. HR Generalist	2.6 years	
HR Generalist 1	1.75 years	
HR Generalist 2	6 months	
HR Generalist 3	1 month	
Coordinator	1.3 years	

HR recognizes its role in employee retention across the government (primarily with compensation functions, offering health and wellness initiatives, good employee relations, responsiveness to safety and risk issues, and by working with ACCGov Manager's Office to complete employee surveys). However, it is important to note that retention is the primary responsibility of every department within ACCGov. According to the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), "the top reason workers leave a job is because they are unhappy with their manager. It goes on to say that other things that turn off employees are a lack of trust in senior management and the perception that the company values making money more than its workers' well-being. That's a good reason for employers to invest in training managers on coaching and providing feedback, encouraging employees with frequent personalized recognition, and treating employees like adults...HR can also increase employee engagement by offering learning opportunities and health and wellness initiatives and by asking employees for their improvement suggestions."



CONCLUSION

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Four



Follow-Up

In an effort to gauge the effectiveness and emphasize the purpose of conducting a comprehensive performance audit, the Office of Operational Analysis intends to follow-up with the Human Resources Department within a year's time and report on the status of any resolution to the findings and recommendations made. The exact schedule will also be considerate of the implementation timelines put forth by the department and/or county management as indicated in this report. It should be noted that not all findings and recommendations will have been agreed to in the same manner or capacity as presented by OA, if at all, and that the department, in consultation with county management, determines which items are prioritized if implementation is only feasible in phases.

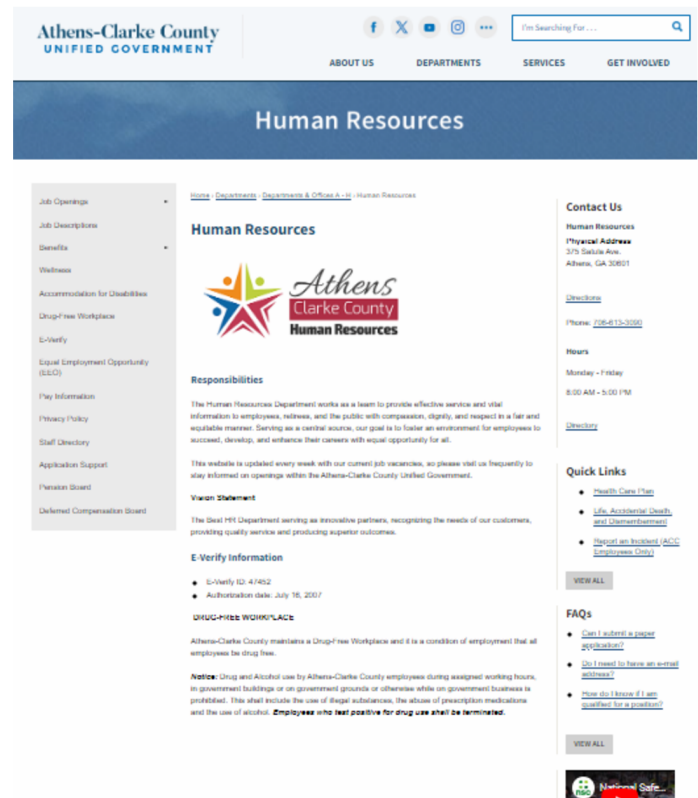
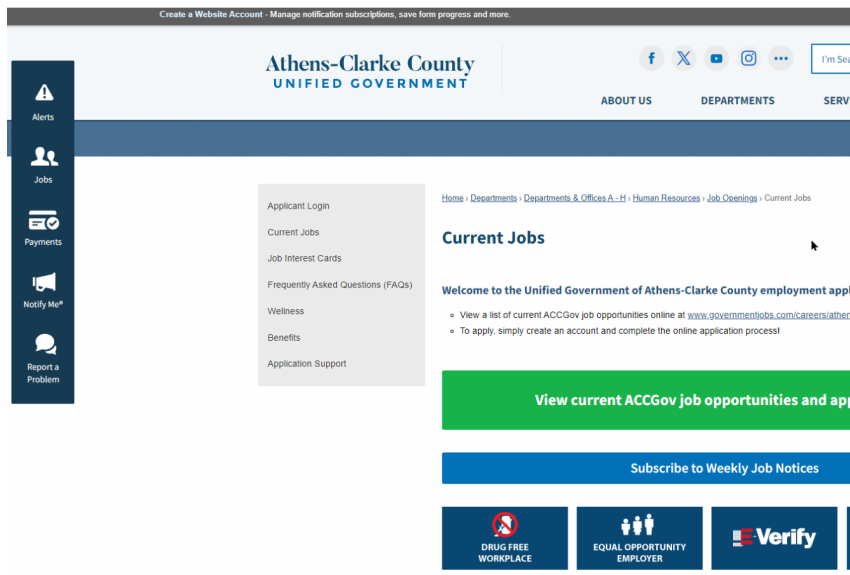
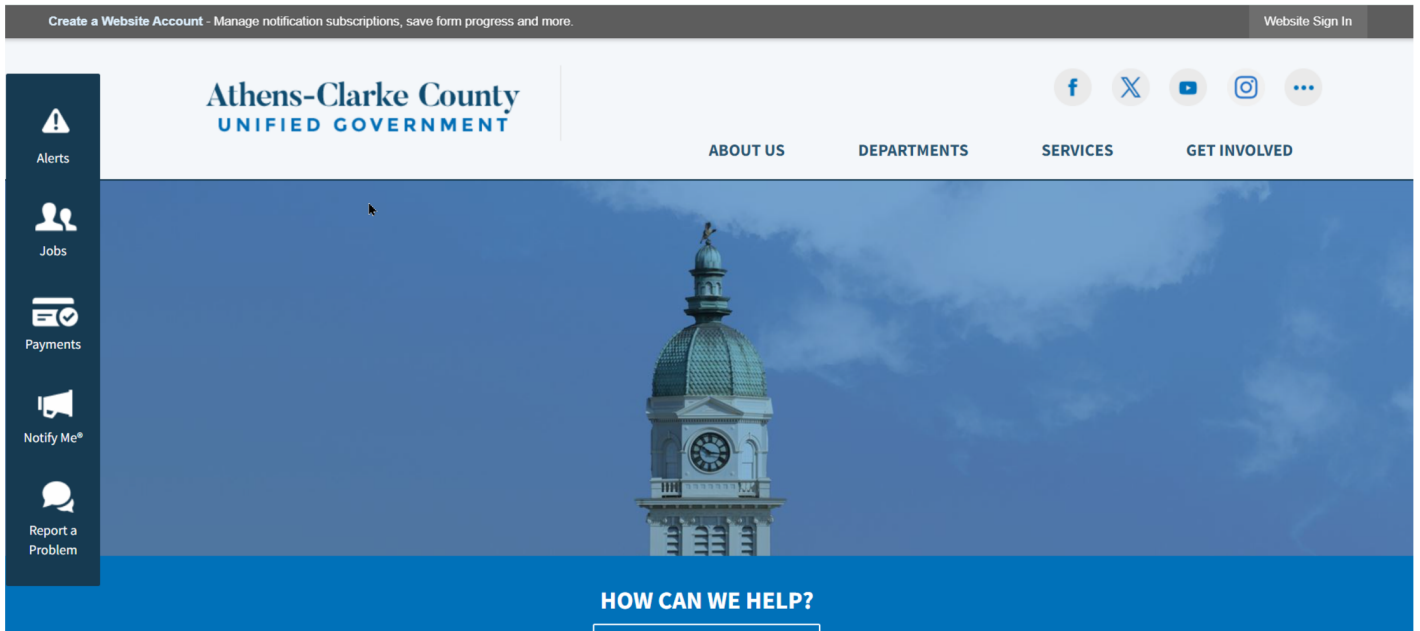
A summary response will be requested at the appropriate time from the subject department, and if necessary, staff from OA will conduct inspections to confirm appropriate actions taken. It is anticipated that the Human Resources Department will have secured new leadership in the Director and Assistant Director positions, thereby stabilizing the environment from which progress can be launched under reestablished initiatives and guidance. Completion of this audit during this period of transition provides an opportunity to maximize impact under the foundational focus it highlights throughout the report.

Any unresolved issues will be brought to the attention of the department and/or county management for further discussion. It is expected that a brief memorandum describing the degree of compliance will be forwarded to the M&C for informational purposes. Timing of this report was purposely scheduled to coincide with planning for the next potential budget cycle (FY26) in an effort to allow ample calculation and discussion that may occur with any solutions dependent upon adequate funding. This same logic also applies to any identified staffing or reorganization outcomes brought forth by the audit.

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

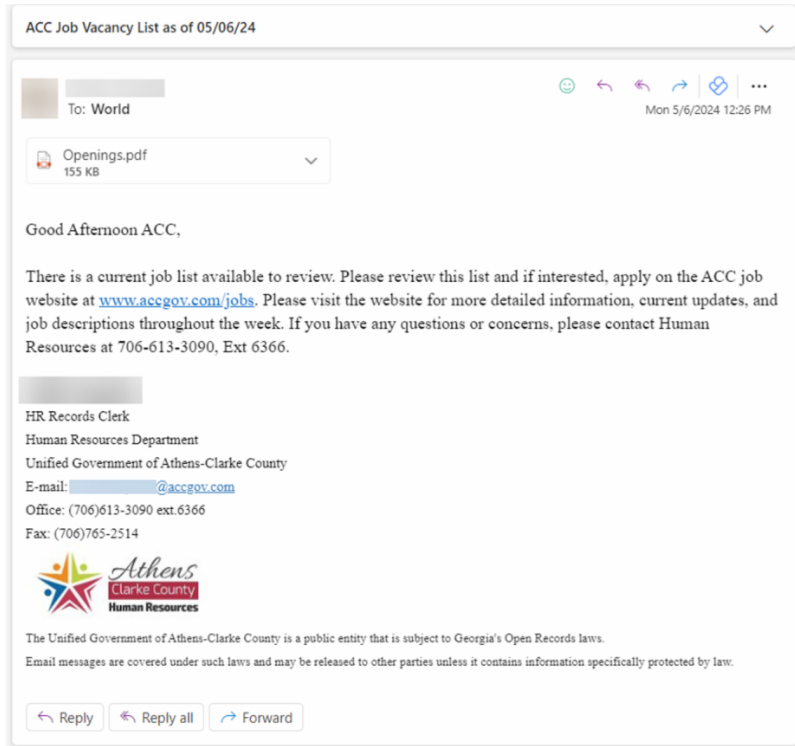
Appendix A--Clockwise from top, ACCGov homepage, HR homepage, and Employment landing page



APPENDIX

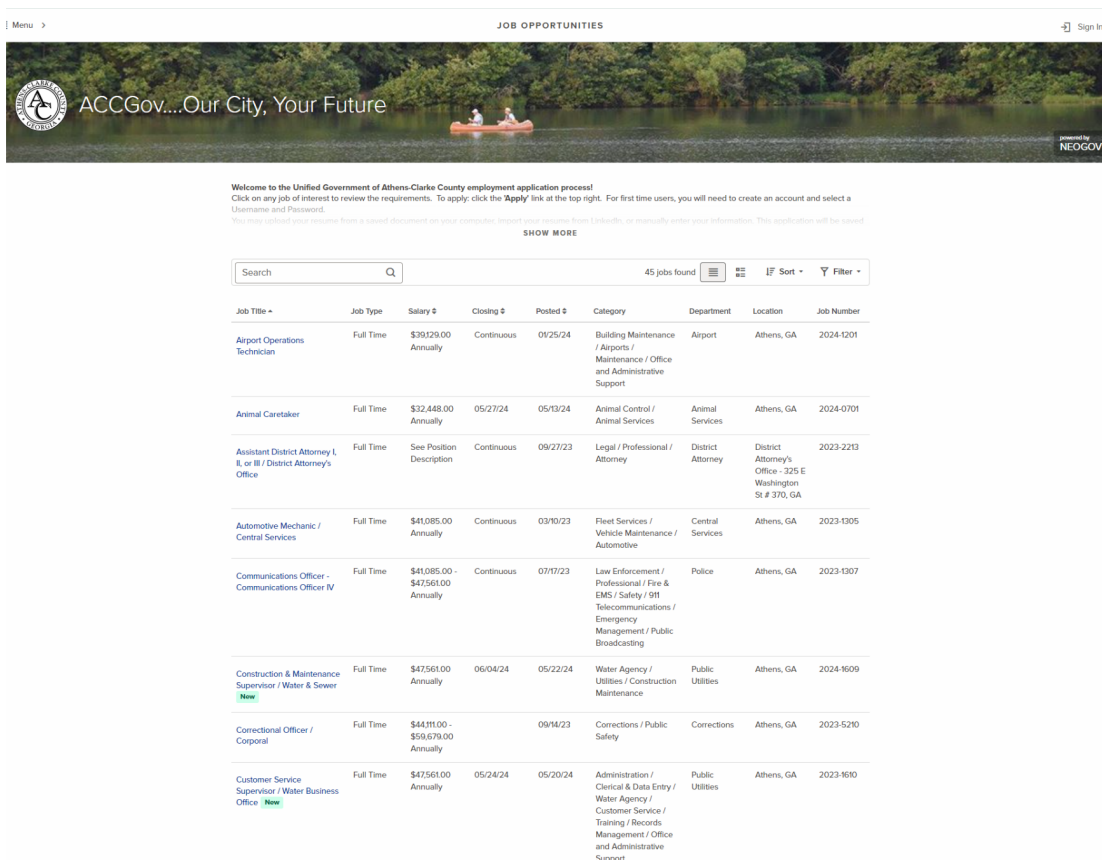
Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix B--Clockwise from top right: Weekly jobs email to ACCGov “World”, printed job listings, and online job listings



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR:

Airport Operations Technician Airport	\$39,129	Continuous Applications
AMI Technician II Public Utilities	\$39,129	Apply by May 19, 2024
Assistant District Attorney I, II, or III District Attorney's Office	See Position Description "\$6,000 Hiring Incentive"	Continuous Applications
Assistant Director Transit	See Position Description	Apply by May 9, 2024
Automotive Mechanic Central Services	\$41,085	Continuous Applications
IN HOUSE ONLY Benefits Coordinator / Retirement Specialist Human Resources Department	\$57,811	Apply by May 7, 2024
Communications Officer – Communications Officer IV Police	\$41,085 - \$47,561 "\$10,000 Hiring Incentive"	Continuous Applications
Corporal Sheriff	\$48,630 - \$65,793 "\$6,000 Hiring Incentive"	Continuous Applications
Correctional Officer / Corporal Corrections	\$44,111 - \$59,679 "\$3,000 Hiring Incentive"	Continuous Applications
Correctional Officer Corrections Part Time/No Benefits	\$21.20 per hour	Continuous Applications
Customer Service Attendant Airport Part Time/No Benefits	\$15.60 per hour	Apply by May 6, 2024
Summer Seasonal Day Camps – Counselors / Directors / Counselors in Training / Teen Camps Leisure Services Part Time / No Benefits	See Position Description	Apply by June 9, 2024
Deputy Sheriff Sheriff	\$48,630 - \$60,071 "\$6,000 Hiring Incentive"	Continuous Applications



APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix C--New Hire Orientation email

(Note: This has been slightly reformatted to fit to page)

Dear :

Welcome to the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County! We are excited to inform you that you have been cleared to start your employment as a Administrative Assistant II with the Department at the annual salary of #####. I trust that this letter finds you mutually excited about your new employment.

Your department will reach out to you in the next couple of days to determine your official start date.

Your First Day of Work

On your first day of work, you will complete required employment paperwork. You will need to bring the following documents with you on your first day of work:

- Copy of Social Security Card, or receipt from the Social Security Administration for requesting replacement of a lost card (both your name and social security number must be on the receipt).
- E-Verify Documents (Complete Section 1 ONLY and select documents from list on last page. Bring original documents on your first day.) E-Verify/I-9 document packet is attached to this email.
- Voided check or letter from bank for direct deposit.
- New hire paperwork, attached to this email (not required, but you may complete ahead of time).

During your first few weeks, you will meet many co-workers, supervisors, managers and human resources staff members. We are all here to support you and to serve as resources. Please let us know what you need to accomplish your new responsibilities.

Onboarding and New Hire Orientation for ALL

Employee ID cards are mandatory for all ACCGov employees. You may either submit a photo of yourself with your application (following the requirements as outlined on the form) or call 762-400-6366 to schedule an appointment with HR to have your photo taken for your ID.

Please be sure to complete the attached ACCGov Employee ID Card Application form and either email it to HRAdministration@accgov.com or fax it to 706-765-2514.

In order to acquaint you with the policies and procedures that make Athens Clarke County a great place to work, we have included below a link to a video that will help you become familiar with them. Click the link or copy and paste it into your browser. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies as a condition of employment with the Unified Government.

[Onboarding New Hire Orientation Video](#)

The personnel system guides our employment rules. There is a link below to that information via the Municode, as well as a link to the ACCGov Employee Handbook. Click the links or copy and paste them into your browser. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by these policies and procedures for the personnel system as a condition of employment with the Unified Government.

[Personnel System of the ACCGov Municode](#)

[2024 Employee Handbook](#)

As part of your onboarding, you will be required to complete the Defensive Driving and the Discrimination & Harassment trainings. A link to this training will be emailed to your ACCGov email address once we have received all of your new hire paperwork. You will be required to complete the training by two weeks from the date the task was assigned. If you do not have an ACCGov email address, your log-in credentials will be sent to your immediate supervisor and they will assign you a computer so you may complete the training.

Also attached is a policy acknowledgement document that you must complete and submit to your department with your new hire paperwork. This document becomes a part of your personnel file in Human Resources and indicates your awareness of your responsibility to review and abide by these policies. Please submit this acknowledgement form to your department Administrative Assistant during the first week of your employment.

Immediate Action Required for Full Time Employees

Full Time Employees: Please review Benefits Review Packet (attached to this email) or at this link: [2024 Benefit Guide](#), and begin considering options for you and any eligible dependents. As part of your total compensation package, a representative from the Benefits Division of Human Resources will contact you to enroll in your benefits. Once your benefit portal is activated, you may access it here: [Benefit Enrollment Portal](#)

Note that our benefits offerings may change at open enrollment.

We have a stellar Wellness Program that we would love for you to be a part of. You will receive additional information in the coming weeks.

Your Job Description:

[Click here to view the job description](#) for your position.

Probationary Period – Full Time Employees Only

The above link to your job description will provide you with information regarding your probationary period.

If you have questions about your full-time Employee benefits (attached to this email), please feel free to contact our Benefits Team at 706-613-3090.

Best wishes to you on your new position with the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County. I hope your employment will be successful and rewarding.

We are excited about you joining us and want to ensure that you are successful in your new role. Please don't hesitate to contact your Human Resources staff at 706-613-3090 with any questions or concerns. We look forward to a positive working relationship!

Sincerely,

Interim Human Resources Director
Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix D--New Hire Meet and Greet flyer (sent as email attachment)



Welcome to ACCGov!

The new hire meet & greet is an opportunity to meet other new employees as well as representatives from the following departments and organizations:

- Manager's Office
- Human Resources: benefits, compensation, employment, safety & risk, and Wellness
- Corebridge Financial
- Employee Charity Drive
- Blood Drives
- Employee Emergency Assistance Fund
- Toastmasters Club
- Recycling Division
- Leisure Services
- Organization Development



Wednesday, June 28
9:30am - 12:30pm



**Lyndon House
Community Room
211 Hoyt Street**



**RSVP Required
by Wednesday, June 21**

@accgov.com



Athens
**Clarke County
Human Resources**

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix E--Website logos of compared jurisdictions



APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix F--Sample of HR Employment Division workload assignments



MEMORANDUM

TO: Department Directors, Appointed Officials, Elected Officials, Sr. Administrative Assistants, Administrative Assistants

THRU: [Redacted], Human Resources Director

FROM: [Redacted], Employment & Employee Relations Administrator

SUBJECT: Employment Departmental Assignments

DATE: August 1, 2023, updated September 11, 2023, October 1, 2023

Redactions in gold indicate Employment & Employee Relations Administrator roles

Listed below are the Employment Generalist Department assignments effective **August 1, 2023**. Please contact your assigned Generalist with any recruitment and selection matters. Public Safety: Contact [Redacted] Employment & Employee Administrator 6368, for Promotional Processes and Assessment Centers.

HR Generalist, 6396	VACANT – temporary assignments	HR Generalist, 6372	HR Generalist, 6369	ER Coordinator, 6370
Animal Services	Finance - [Redacted]	Economic Development	Asport	Attorney's Office
Building Inspections	HCD - [Redacted]	Courts Clerk of Courts Juvenile, Magistrate, Municipal, Probate, State, Superior Court (and Probation)	Board of Elections	Manager's Office Organizational Dev. GIO Office of Sustain Office of Inclusion Public Information SPLOST
Central Services	IT - [Redacted]	Mayor's Office Clerk of Commission	Fire & Emergency Services	District Attorney's Office
Corrections	Leisure Services - [Redacted]	Transportation & Public Works	Human Resources	Solicitor General's Office
Cooperative Extension	Operational Analysis - [Redacted]		Planning	
Solid Waste	Police - [Redacted]		Public Utilities	
Tax Assessor	Transit - [Redacted]		Sheriff's Office	
			Tax Commissioner	
Website	GPP - [Redacted], L&E	IDE, Website, LMS-articulate	L&E, Neogov training and updates, Website	ER, HR Acuity

Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Human Resources Department
375 Satula Avenue, Athens, GA 30601, 706.613.3090 (p) 706.613.3118 (fax)

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix G--Apprenticeship program agreement between Macon-Bibb County and Bibb County School District

Director of Human Resources



Assistant Director of Human Resources

Macon-Bibb County
Department of Human Resources
545 First Street • P. O. Box 247 • Macon, Georgia 31201-0247
Tel: (478) 219-5444 • Fax: (478) 751-2732
www.maconbibb.us

- Title:** HR 0002 - MACON-BIBB COUNTY AND BIBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP COLLABORATION
- Policy:** MBCG is committed to its mission to provide our local school system with resources that will help support the overall growth, skill, and technical acumen of students desiring a future in local government.
- Purpose:** MBCG and BCSD partnership will provide continuity in services and resources to support high school juniors and seniors to ease school transitions and promote improved attendance in after-school programs while learning and developing skillsets requisite of opportunities in areas of participating governmental departments. MBCG's commitment to eligible students is to facilitate access to a range of learning and developmental opportunities, provide students with information to best support individual learning, and provide future qualified students with alternative methods to gain long-term careers with MBCG.
- Scope:** BCSD will provide MBCG with students actively attending diploma-led programs within any local high school to formally interview with any approved participating and/or designated MBCG department. Students selected to intern as apprentices within these departments will be screened as appropriate by the MBCG Human Resources department. It will be the responsibility of MBCG Human Resources and BCSD's Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator to effectively manage time and attendance, continued learning opportunities, and issues related to discipline or behavior. Eligibility includes students in 11th and 12th grades and attending any Bibb County High School. Apprenticeship hours shall not exceed (20) hours within a work week, nor shall working hours extend beyond MBCG's normal working hours. This program is not associated with, nor will it coincide with other ongoing programs partnered with MBCG and the BCSD. Official recruitment for this program will commence in March 2023. Students selected to participate will commence their apprenticeship in August 2023.
- Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of all participating departments to ensure that safety is prioritized. Furthermore, departments may not subject apprentices to hours or timeframes extending beyond the times previously described. Student participation shall not replace, substitute, or augment the employment of otherwise, qualified candidates desired to fill a role or position to further the mission of the department. However, it is expected that after successful completion of the student apprenticeship program, departments consider these students for full-time employment within MBCG; evaluating them based on the training, experience, and mentorship gained from the apprenticeship program.

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix H --Macon-Bibb County Training and Development Policy administered by HR Department

Director of Human Resources



Assistant Director of Human Resources

Macon-Bibb County
Department of Human Resources
545 First Street • P. O. Box 247
Macon, Georgia 31202-0247
Tel: (478) 803-0532 • Fax: (478) 751-2732
www.maconbibb.us

Title:	HR 0003 EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY
Policy:	Through the MBCG Employee Training Development Policy, MBCG will develop and conduct a continuous and coordinated training tool to enhance the overall mission in employee engagement throughout our county Government. MBCG HR intends to provide a culture of learning where employees at all levels will receive organizationally mandated bi-annual training.
Purpose:	MBCG is committed to the training and development of its employees. Training will be formulated and may include revisions each year through the HR Department. Training will be based on the current needs of MBCG, laws, policies, and/or policy updates. HR will outline training objectives and target specific deficiencies for the year.
Scope:	This policy applies to all permanent, full-time, and part-time employees of MBCG. All eligible employees covered by this policy will receive the fundamentals of training in an unbiased and non-discriminatory manner.
Responsibilities:	The Employee Training and Development Policy is a shared effort between HR, Department Heads, and Staff. A concerted and collaborative effort in continuous professional development will be the cornerstone of MBCG. The MBCG HR Department is responsible for conducting workshops, seminars, and refresher courses to keep the workforce informed and updated with ongoing training and policy updates. Each Department Head will be responsible for identifying areas of improvement and developmental needs of their employees through a continuous coaching environment. The staff is responsible for receiving and applying these types of routine training in a day-to-day work setting.
Definitions:	More commonly, Bi-Annual Training will be held at the Macon City Auditorium. It is intended that through MBCG Employee Training and Development Policy Annual training be defined as mandatory training (2) times per year; once in the Spring, once in the Fall, and will be deemed as a government-wide training evolution.

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix I --Cover page of NEOGOV marketing flyer

The header of the NEOGOV marketing flyer features a background image of four diverse professionals (three men and one woman) in a meeting, looking at a tablet. The text is overlaid on a dark blue semi-transparent box.

NEO GOV

A One-Stop HR Suite for the Public Sector

Make work easier by streamlining everyday HR processes in one integrated system. Built based on public sector best practice, NEOGOV's easy-to-use platform is customizable to your needs to enhance your operations and efficiency. With modern solutions to the most pressing issues you face each day, you can put more focus on the work that matters.

What We Help You With



Recruitment

Get qualified public sector applicants for hard-to-fill positions.



Hiring

Reduce time-to-hire and onboard new employees in less time.



Development

Boost retention and empower employee career growth.



Performance

Give ongoing feedback in one place for easy, fair evaluations.



Documents & Workflows

Eliminate paper and time-consuming routing tasks.



Policies & Compliance

Keep staff up-to-date on critical content like policies and procedures.



Employee Information

Consolidate Core HR, benefits, payroll, and T&A.

"If you haven't tried NEOGOV, you're working too hard. You will realize how easy it is to run your whole staffing process without breaking a sweat."

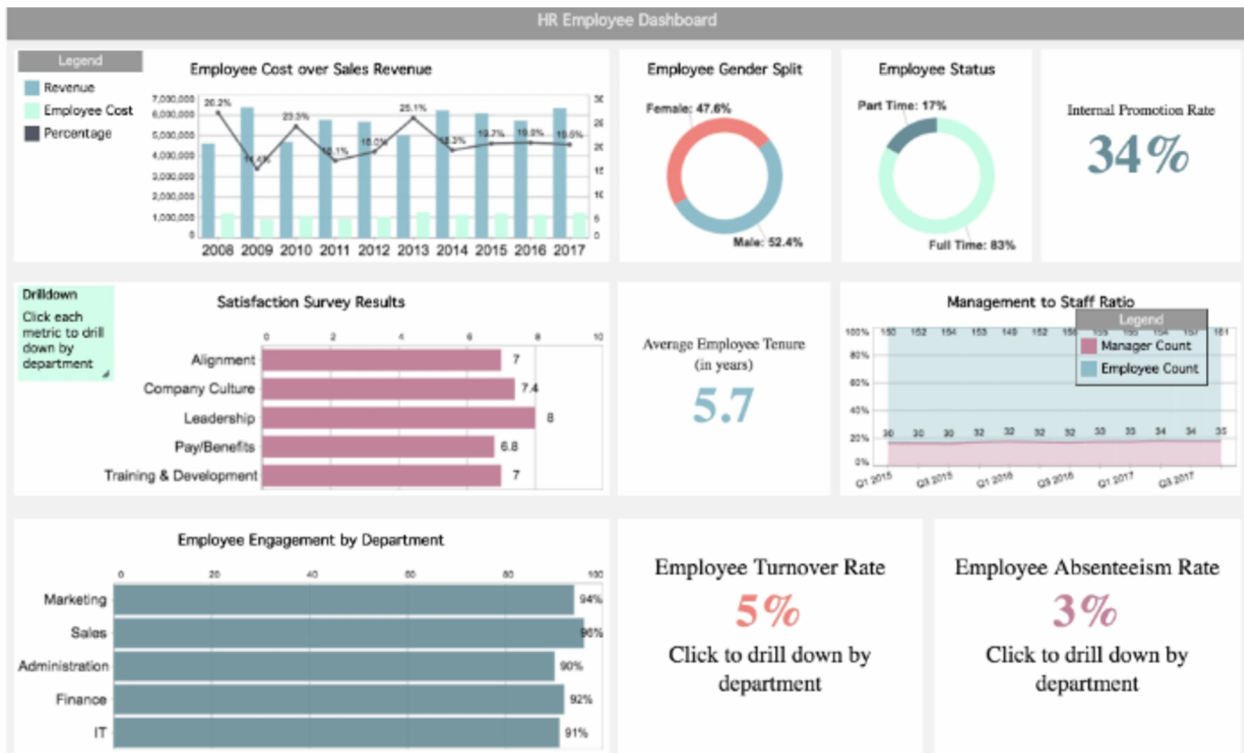
Andreas Pyper, City of Santa Barbara, CA

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix J--Samples of HR Data Driven Dashboards

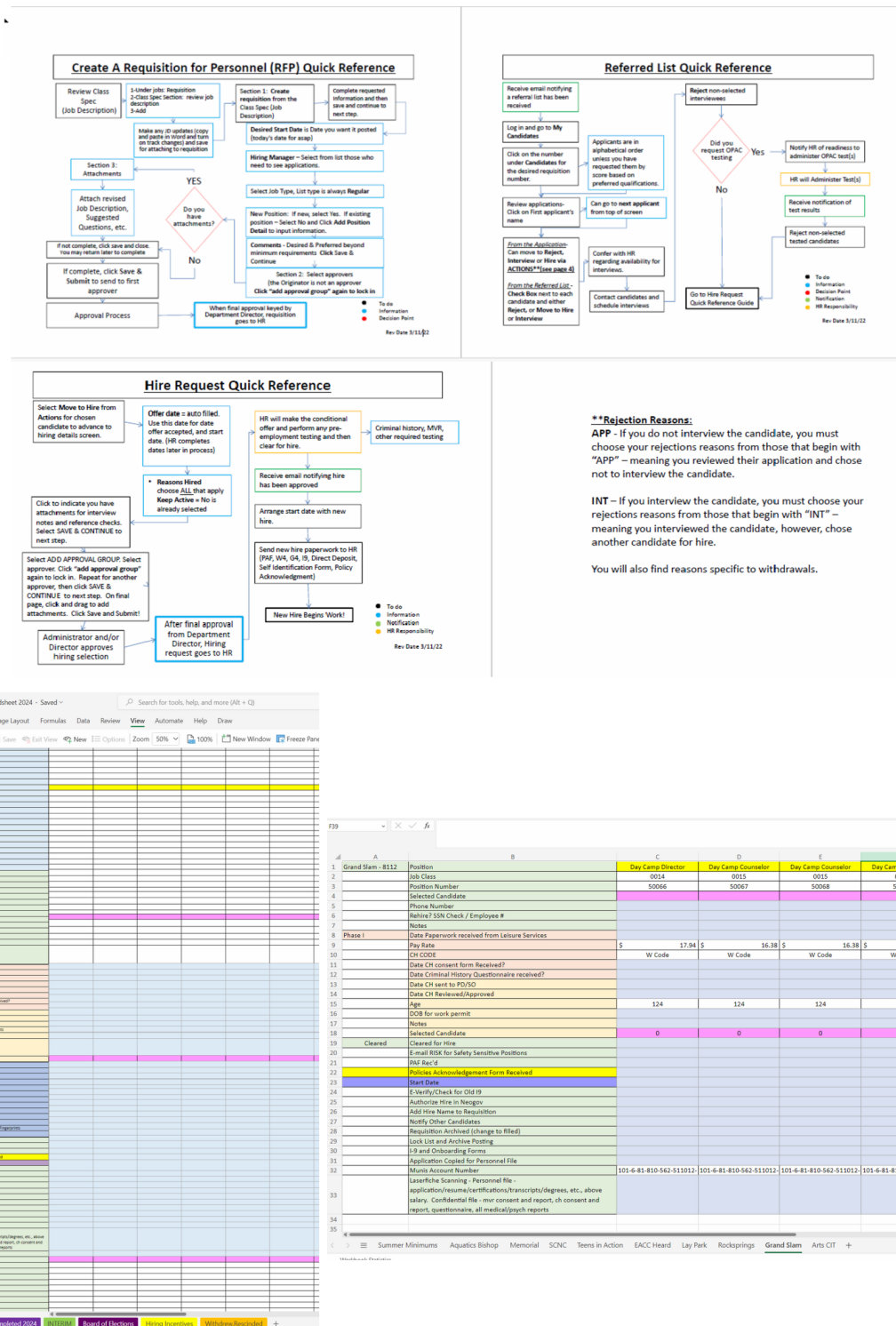
(<https://www.clearpointstrategy.com/blog/executive-dashboard-examples>)



APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix K--HR Employment Division reference sheet for R/H/O practices, top, and one HR Generalist's sample excel sheet for tracking progress, bottom



APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix L--Comparative Analysis data

JURISDICTION	POPULATION	# OF HR STAFF	HR DEPARTMENT BUDGET	BUDGET \$ PER HR EMPLOYEE	ALLOCATD POSITIONS	FILLED POSITIONS	EMPLOYMENT PERCENTAGE
ACCGov	128,711	30	\$2,778,194	\$92,606	1776	1529	86.09%
ADJACENT							
Barrow County	83,505	4	\$479,145	\$119,786	535	490	91.59%
Jackson County	75,907	5	\$517,615	\$103,523	692	466	67.34%
Oconee County	41,799	2	\$809,712	\$404,856	288	273	94.79%
65-MILE RADIUS							
Forsyth County	251,283	17	\$1,822,041	\$107,179	2079	1805	86.82%
Gwinnett County	957,062	61	\$91,087,711	\$1,493,241	5676	4726	83.26%
Hall County	203,136	10	\$1,205,890	\$120,589	1843.5	1645	89.23%
CONSOLIDATED							
Augusta-Richmond County	202,081	24	\$2,349,180	\$97,883	2840	2786	98.10%
Macon-Bibb County	157,346	15	\$1,458,164	\$97,211	1884	n/d*	n/d*
Muscogee County Columbus	206,922	20	\$2,177,717	\$108,886	n/d	n/d	n/d
SIMILAR IN SE US							
Tuscaloosa, AL	110,602	16	\$3,565,930	\$222,871	1582	1362	86.09%
Greenville County, SC	525,534	11.8	\$1,329,330	\$112,655	n/d	n/d	n/d
Gainesville, FL	141,085	23	\$2,366,593	\$102,895	1496.75	1314.25	87.81%
Orange County, NC	148,696	10	\$3,451,665	\$345,167	1297	1185	91.36%
*Macon-Bibb County systems down and unable to retrieve data, per county employees							
JURISDICTION	JOB POSTING SOFTWARE	HIRING FAQ SECTION	TITLE OF JOB POSTINGS PAGE	DOCUMENTED PROCESSES	ACCEPTS PAPER APPLICATIONS	POSTING-HIRE TIME AVAILABLE	BENEFIT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE
ACCGov	NEOGOV	Yes	Jobs/Job Opportunities	No	No	Yes	Yes
ADJACENT							
Barrow County	NEOGOV	No	Employment	Yes	No	No	Yes
Jackson County	LOGO	No	Employment (Opportunities)	No	Yes	No	Yes
Oconee County	CIVICPLUS	No	Jobs/Job Opportunities	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
65-MILE RADIUS							
Forsyth County	NEOGOV	Yes	Careers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Gwinnett County	NEOGOV	No	Current Openings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hall County	ADP	No	Job Opportunities	No	Yes	No	Yes
CONSOLIDATED							
Augusta-Richmond County	NEOGOV	Yes	Employment/Careers	Yes	No	No	Yes
Macon-Bibb County	NEOGOV	No	Employment (Opportunities)	Yes	No	No	Yes
Muscogee County Columbus	NEOGOV	Yes	Careers	Yes	No	No	Yes
SIMILAR IN SE US							
Tuscaloosa, AL	NEOGOV	No	Employment (Job) Opportunities	Yes	No	No	Yes
Greenville County, SC	TYLER TECH	Yes	Careers	Yes	Yes	No	No
Gainesville, FL	WORKDAY	No	Employment, Careers	No	No	No	Yes
Orange County, NC	NEOGOV	Yes	Employment	Yes	No	No	Yes
https://www.barrowga.org/258/Human-Resources https://www.jacksoncountygov.com/276/Human-Resources https://www.oconeecounty.com/273/Human-Resources https://www.forsythco.com/Departments-Offices/Employment-Services https://www.gwinnettcounty.com/web/gwinnett/departments/hr https://www.hallcounty.org/309/Human-Resources https://www.augustaga.gov/643/Human-Resources https://maconbibb.us/human-resources/#:~:text=The%20County%20employs%20approximately%201%2C884%20individuals%20in%2031%20departments. https://www.choosecolumbusga.com/site-selectors/major-employers/p/item/7367/aflac https://www.tuscaloosa.com/government/work-with-us https://www.greenvillecounty.org/HumanResources/Jobs.aspx https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Employment-Pages/Employment https://www.orangecountync.gov/882/Human-Resources-Department U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts.https://www.census.gov							

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix M --Conditional Offer email



2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Congratulations! The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County is extending to you a conditional offer of employment for the position of [REDACTED] with the Athens-Clarke County [REDACTED] Department.

Please do not give notice of separation to your current employer at this time. You must first successfully pass a criminal background check. Depending upon the position, you may also be required to pass a motor vehicle screening, drug test, medical history/physical exam, and/or psychological examination prior to employment. Successful compliance with these job-related and necessary conditions of employment is required.

Attached you will find the required consent form(s) for the initial phase of your conditional offer along with the Criminal History and MVR Information Request. You must complete and return both forms and this questionnaire as soon as possible, but no later than two business days of the date of this email. You may return completed and signed forms to [REDACTED]@accgov.com, via fax at (706) 765-2514 to the attention of [REDACTED], or in person at Human Resources, 375 Satula Ave, Athens, GA 30601.

A final offer of employment will be extended to you only after you have satisfied all of the pre-employment requirements for the position. All candidates offered this position are required to successfully comply with the same conditions.

This merit system position requires that you satisfactorily complete a probationary period as specified in the Athens-Clarke County Personnel System. Nothing in this letter should be construed as a contract or offer of continued employment.

If you have any questions concerning this conditional offer of employment, please contact [REDACTED] at 706-613-3093 or [REDACTED]@accgov.com.
Fax: 706-765-2514

If you do not want to receive emails please click on the following : [Unsubscribe from Emails](#)

[Reply](#)

[Forward](#)

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix M--Conditional Offer email attachments



The Unified Government of
Athens-Clarke County, Georgia

MVR-EE
Human Resources
375 Satula Ave.
Athens, GA 30601

Authorization to Obtain Motor Vehicle Records

INTERNAL USE ONLY:					
1 POSITION INFORMATION:					
Department/Division					
Position		INTERNAL USE ONLY: Position No.		INTERNAL USE ONLY: Employee No.	
2 DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUIREMENT FOR POSITION: [INTERNAL USE ONLY]					
License Type/Class Required (MVR - CLASS C or A/F/CDL)		Requirement Timeframe: [] Prior to Employment [] Within _____ months of Hire Date		Date of Hire (mm/dd/yyyy) Deadline (mm/dd/yyyy) Rec'd?	
3 EMPLOYEE INFORMATION:					
Last Name (suffr... Jr., III, etc.)		First Name		Middle Name	
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)		Address		City	
Phone/Cell		e-mail address		State GA Zip	
4 LICENSE INFORMATION:					
*Driver's License Number		*Issued By		*DL Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	
*License Type/Class		*Request: [X] 3 Year [] 7 Year			
5 NOTICE AND SIGNATURE					
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:					
I hereby authorize the Athens-Clarke County Human Resources Department or other authorized representative of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGOV) bearing this release or copy thereof (in compliance with organizational, state and/or federal requirements) to obtain any information pertaining to my driving record for pre-employment purposes within 12 months of my acknowledgement of this document. If hired by ACCGOV, I authorize ACCGOV to obtain said information on a periodic/annual review basis for the duration of my employment with this agency. Furthermore, I understand that ACCGOV employees are required to report any citations, charges, or license status changes to supervisors and/or Human Resources immediately.					
This release is executed with full knowledge and understanding that the information is for the official use of Athens-Clarke County Human Resources Department. Consent is granted for Athens-Clarke County to furnish such information, as is described above, to third parties in the course of fulfilling its official responsibilities.					
Should there be any questions as to the validity of this release, you may contact me as indicated above.					
Signature			Date		

Form No. ACCUG-MVR-EE (Rev. 02/2009)

Page No. 1 of 1



CRIMINAL HISTORY & MVR QUESTIONNAIRE - CONDITIONAL OFFER

Candidate Name:
Position:

As part of your conditional offer of employment with the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, please complete the following information. You must include details (date, charge, etc.) regarding any criminal conviction or pending charges, and motor vehicle history.

NOTE:

A conviction will not result in an automatic disqualification of employment but will be reviewed based on the nature and gravity of the offense, the time passed since the offense and/or completion of sentence, and the nature of the job sought. **The omission of any criminal history or pending charges information will result in automatic disqualification.**

1. Have you ever been convicted, plead guilty or no contest for any misdemeanor or felonies since the age of 18? Check one.

☐ YES

☐ NO

2. If you answered yes for any convictions, guilty pleas or pleas of no contest since the age of 18 list the following. If you need additional space, please use a separate piece of paper. You must include the information requested below on each charge.

Date and place of offense

Charges

Felony or Misdemeanor

Disposition (how was the citation handled)

Date and place of offense

Charges

Felony or Misdemeanor

Disposition (how was the citation handled)

Page 1 of 2



ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY UNIFIED GOVERNMENT RELEASE OF CRIMINAL HISTORY CONSENT FORM

I, _____ Last Name First Name Middle
Social Security Number Height Weight Eye Color Hair Color
Date of Birth Sex Race
Street Address City State Zip

Authorize: Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Authorized Human Resources Representative
Satula Governmental Building, 375 Satula Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30601
(706) 613-3090

to receive my criminal history record from the NCIC/GCIC database. I understand this request will only be used for employment purposes.

Signature Date

* Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

* Parental/Guardian consent is required for applicants under age 18.

Where information provided through your criminal history indicates criminal charges outside the state of Georgia, it is your responsibility as an applicant to provide the Athens-Clarke County Human Resources Department with a copy of all criminal history records in all other applicable states. Failure to provide the required information may result in the disqualification of your application.

If hired, I, _____ (print name), authorize the Athens-Clarke County Human Resources Department to perform periodic Criminal History background checks for the duration of my employment with this agency.

TO BE COMPLETED BY HUMAN RESOURCES PERSONNEL ONLY:

- ☐ General Employment (Purpose code "E")
☐ Employment with children (Purpose code "W")
☐ Employment with criminal justice agency - civilian (Purpose code "J") (i.e. police dept. records technicians, intake clerks)
☐ Employment with criminal justice agency - P.O.S.T. certified (Purpose code "Z") (i.e. Police Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Correctional Officer, Probation Officer, Communications Officer)



CRIMINAL HISTORY & MVR QUESTIONNAIRE - CONDITIONAL OFFER

Candidate Name:
Position:

3. Do you have any pending criminal charges against you by Federal, State, city, county, consolidated government or other law enforcement authorities? Check one.

☐ YES

☐ NO

4. If you answered yes above, list any pending criminal charges against you by Federal, State, city, county, consolidated government or other law enforcement authorities? If you need additional space, please use a separate piece of paper. You must include the information requested below on each charge.

Date and place of offense

Charges

Felony or Misdemeanor

5. Have you had any traffic violations in the past three years? Check one.

☐ YES

☐ NO

6. If you answered yes above, list the date(s) and offense(s) of any traffic violations you have received in the past three years.

I acknowledge and understand that any significant omission, inconsistency or misrepresentation will be considered falsification of my application. My application will be disqualified, and if I am a current employee, I could be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Candidate Printed Name: _____

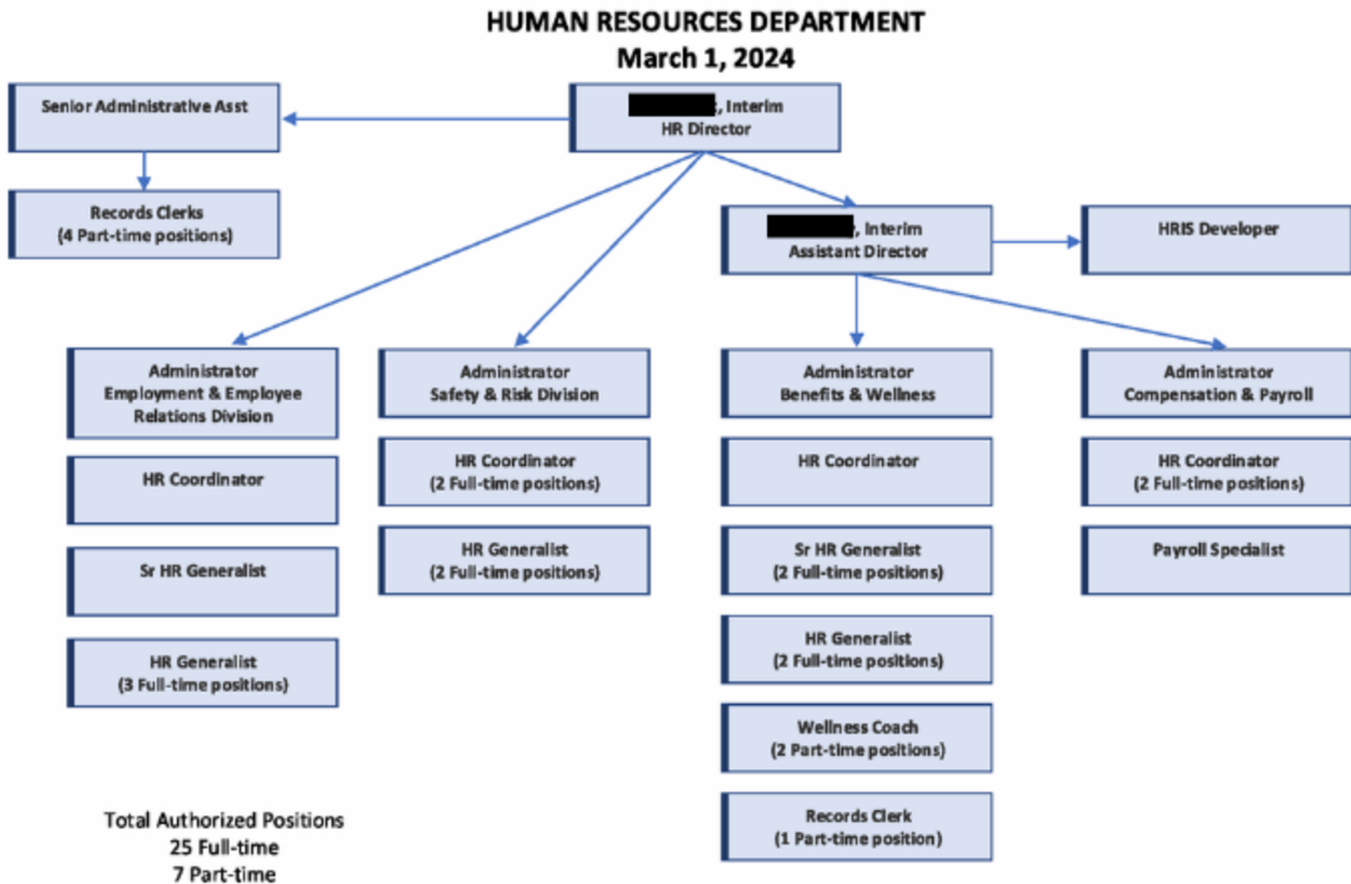
Candidate Signature: _____ Date: _____

Page 2 of 2

APPENDIX

Employee Recruiting, Hiring and Orientation - Chapter Five

Appendix N--Updated organizational chart during transition of leadership (provided by HR Department)



Signature: _____

Manager: _____