



To: Mayor & Commission

From: Gavin J. Hassemer, Internal Auditor

Date: November 26, 2025

Subject: Human Resources Comprehensive Performance Audit Follow-Up

On August 6, 2024, the Commission approved by unanimous vote to accept the FY24 Comprehensive Audit of Employee Recruitment, Hiring, and Orientation (Human Resources Department), as prepared by the Operational Analysis (OA) Office. The report included six findings with accompanying recommendations for management and the department to consider. With the cooperation of the Human Resources Department, our office has conducted a review of the status of those recommendations.

The objectives of this review were:

1. To assess the status of the findings discovered during the audit
2. To gauge the status of implementation of recommendations
3. To gather and report on pertinent information regarding changes to the office which might impact the findings and conclusions of the audit report

This follow-up investigation included written correspondence, an in-person meeting, and a field visit by OA staff. This review has no formal opinions or conclusions but is performed to ensure mutual understanding among all parties regarding the audit and operational analysis processes. You will find the results, including any observations, in the attached document, “Follow-Up Review of the Human Resources Department—FY24 Comprehensive Audit Report.”

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this report to the Athens-Clarke County Internal Auditor. The Internal Auditor wishes to thank the Human Resources Department and the Manager’s Office for their cooperation with this initiative.

Finding #1	Observation		
Recruitment/hiring/orientation software is not being used to its fullest capacity	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 #1.1	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #1 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
Invest in targeted, formalized and required training for HR staff and hiring managers regarding NEOGOV to assure optimal use of applicant screening features.	<p>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 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 parttime 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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	Implementation Complete	<p>See attached NEOGOV Training schedules for both 2025 and 2026. 2026 Schedule is already on the website at https://accgov.com/320/Human-Resources</p> <p><i>Legal & Effective Interview Training, originally a six to seven hour in-person training, has been split into two parts: Online training via Take Aim and classroom experiential training. This decision was made to provide more opportunities for hiring managers and other employees to participate in the training; especially those who are unable to take an entire day away from the office/field. The online training portion was developed in Articulate by HR Staff this year. First week of November, Organizational Development is uploading into Take Aim. Then, we will publish a training calendar and resume trainings immediately.</i></p>
Recommendation #1.2	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #1 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

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.	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<i>Implementation In Progress</i>	<i>This process did not unfold the way we had anticipated, because we encountered obstacles to utilizing Take Aim, MUNIS, and Sharepoint. Now, we have created 2 processes, 1 for employees with an ACCGov email address in TakeAim, and 1 for those without one through NEOGOV. However, we are in the process of building an on-boarding/off-boarding platform in NEOGOV where forms and other employee information will transfer to MUNIS.</i>
Recommendation #1.3	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #1 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<i>Implementation in Progress</i>	<p><i>Invitations to the Take Aim Onboarding and Policy Overview are sent directly from Take Aim/OD following every pay period. We appreciate the O.D. Coordinator's assistance in this process and support while we built out the material in Articulate and making sure it was loaded into Take Aim appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>For the onboarding employees, we have held open computer lab times at Bobby Snipes for September and October with upcoming dates on November 19, December 3, and December 12 for this year. This is hosted by HR staff to assist with questions and available to new employees without access to computers in their workspace. Employees have access to a computer and can begin/complete their onboarding learning modules.</i></p> <p><i>Upon further research, we quickly learned that we were not going to be able to develop the Onboarding and Offboarding in Munis to meet the needs of our employees. In August, we added the Neogov Onboarding and Offboarding Platform to our Applicant Tracking Platform. The kickoff meeting with our Neogov Project Manager was held on August 18, 2025. We began holding weekly meetings with our Neogov Implementation Consultant on August 26, 2025. We are continuing to meet weekly and work on building out the Onboarding and Offboarding Platform. Pilot testing with at least one ACCGov department will begin in November 2025. The projected date to begin training for the departments and go live with Onboarding is January 2026.</i></p> <p><i>Training for HR Staff: Employment Administrator and Assistant HR Director attended the Neogov Conference this year at the end of September and attended classes on Onboarding, Offboarding, Eforms, Perform, and Analytics/Reporting. Future Neogov Platform Consideration: Human Resources is interested in adding both Eforms and Perform to our current contract with Neogov. Neogov is the owner of PowerDMS already utilized by a couple ACCGov departments for training. HR also has interest in adding this for ongoing compliancy training for ACCGov employees.</i></p>
Recommendation #1.4	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #1 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<i>Recommendation Not Pursued</i>	<i>Disagreed</i>

Recommendation #1.5	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #1 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<p><i>Implementation in Progress</i></p>	<p><i>Employment Administrator and Assistant HR Director attended the Neogov Conference in late September 2025 and attended classes on Onboarding, Offboarding, Eforms, Perform, and Analytics/Reporting. Human Resources in currently seeking to add both Eforms and Perform to our current contract with Neogov. Human Resources hired the Human Resources Coordinator assigned to Performance Evaluations on September 8, 2025. This employee is collaborating with Organization Development to learn the PerPro system for evaluations due in March 2026. Neogov is the owner of PowerDMS already utilized by a couple ACCGov departments for training. HR also has interest in adding PowerDMS for ongoing compliancy training related to Employment Law for ACCGov employees.</i></p>

Finding #2	Observation		
Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		
Recommendation #2.1	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #2 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. <p>The requisition is covered in detail in the NEOGOV training, and process charts are provided to everyone who uses the NEOGOV system (attached).</p> <p>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).</p>	Recommendation Not Pursued	<p>(2.1 – 2.3) – Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices.</p> <p><i>Human Resources disagreed with this finding as a whole but did agree to work with departments so they could request to begin receiving applications after the 5 working day restriction in ordinance. We were already doing this with continuous postings (an average of 72% of all postings are running continuously), but now allow for all postings, if requested. Not all departments request to utilize this option but prefer to wait for the position closing to receive the applications.</i></p> <p><i>ACCGov Ordinance prohibits HR from sending over all applications. Unless a position is appointed, the Ordinance requires Recruiters to screen applications for minimum qualifications.</i></p>
Recommendation #2.2	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #2 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
Do not send automatic rejection letters to applicants/candidates until a final offer is accepted. There 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."	<p>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 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.</p> <p>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).</p>	Recommendation Not Pursued	<p>(2.1 – 2.3) – Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices.</p> <p><i>Human Resources disagreed with this finding as a whole but did agree to work with departments so they could request to begin receiving applications after the 5 working day restriction in ordinance. We were already doing this with continuous postings (an average of 72% of all postings are running continuously), but now allow for all postings, if requested. Not all departments request to utilize this option but prefer to wait for the position closing to receive the applications.</i></p> <p><i>ACCGov Ordinance prohibits HR from sending over all applications. Unless a position is appointed, the Ordinance requires Recruiters to screen applications for minimum qualifications.</i></p>
Recommendation #2.3	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #2 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:</p> <p>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).</p>	<p><i>Recommendation Not Pursued</i></p>	<p><i>(2.1 – 2.3) – Lack of consistency and understanding among, and ownership of, recruitment/hiring/orientation (R/H/O) practices.</i></p> <p><i>Human Resources disagreed with this finding as a whole but did agree to work with departments so they could request to begin receiving applications after the 5 working day restriction in ordinance. We were already doing this with continuous postings (an average of 72% of all postings are running continuously), but now allow for all postings, if requested. Not all departments request to utilize this option but prefer to wait for the position closing to receive the applications.</i></p> <p><i>ACCGov Ordinance prohibits HR from sending over all applications. Unless a position is appointed, the Ordinance requires Recruiters to screen applications for minimum qualifications.</i></p>
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Finding #3	Observation		
R/H/O practices of the HR Department are not data-driven	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 #3.1	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #3 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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.</p> <p>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 webpage 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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	Implementation Complete	<i>FY25 ACCGov Strategic Plan was reviewed in Fall 2024, and consistent data-driven goals were created to address the current initiatives and milestones. HR has continued to work with Budget & Strategic Analysis Department to ensure our monthly, quarterly, and annual data was reported for Clearpoint/Sharepoint in a timely manner. The Assistant HR Director also provides biweekly vacancy reports to the HR Director and Employment & Employee Relations Administrator. These reports are shared with the Employment team for use as they work with their departments.</i>
Recommendation #3.2	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #3 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

<p>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."</p>	<p>Partially Agree: HR works with 43 different ACCGov departments. Each of these departments are 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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<p><i>Recommendation Not Pursued</i></p>	<p><i>HR continues to work in a supportive role with departments to meet any goals they have for their recruitment efforts. We maintain metrics on time-to-fill for positions, provide that feedback to departments to help them understand barriers to successful recruitment strategies. Employment Division has worked with departments to place ads in additional strategic external locations. Conversations are held regularly between HR generalists and departmental hiring managers to determine if positions need to be extended when applications received are low. Additionally, departments have been encouraged to take advantage of the recruiting programs/tools available to them, including career ladders, above-salary requests, hiring incentives, posting with a salary range, and in-grade incentives.</i></p>
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Finding #4 Lack of flexibility and agility in recruitment and hiring, especially regarding local workforce	Observation 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.		
Recommendation #4.1 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.	Departmental Response (2024) 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. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.	Departmental Update (2025) Implementation in Progress	Further detail regarding Recommendation #4 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025) <i>ACCGov engaged with Segal, for a Comprehensive Compensation and Classification Study for the Unified Pay Table. Job description review and updates is a part of this study. The study will move to the market phase in November 2025, and the study is anticipated to be completed in late Q3/early Q4 FY26. As part of this study, skills/education/experience requirements will be assessed and evaluated.</i> <i>HR Employment consistently participates in local college and high school career fairs (as well as community career fairs). We also invite departments to join us at these career fairs. In 2024, we attended 4, and in 2025 9 fairs have been attended to date with the next occurring on December 1, 2025. Human Resources is part of the collaborative work group to create a Returning Residents program between ACCGov Departments and the ACCGov Diversion Center. This policy is still in process.</i> <i>Human Resources continued working with the Work-Based Learning (previously, Great Promise Partnership) Program in the Clarke County School District through July 2025. At that time the program ended and Human Resources sought approval to utilize those funds to continue working with the Clarke County School District's Work Based Learning (WBL) Program. In this transition, we are in the process of creating a resource book that will align ACCGov apprenticeship opportunities with the Clarke County School District's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathways. This work is being completed by Human Resources WBL student with oversight of HR generalists. We have met regularly with the Clarke County School District's WBL Coordinators and CCSD Workforce Development Coordinator. In the meetings and through regular email, we have aligned our positions to 16 CTAE pathways which includes 23 different departments (see attached spreadsheet). There is also a general pathway that would allow students the opportunity to work within any department of ACCGov. Clarke County School District's WBL Coordinators and CCSD Workforce Development Coordinator attended the 10/2025 department director meeting to present information about the Work Based Learning Program and the CTAE pathways. See attached spreadsheet for students per semester to date. We have hired 9 students into ACCGov positions following GPP student experience since 2020.</i> <i>HR Employment staff are currently working on pilot testing 4 positions using a more attractive job posting that will accomplish the following. We will monitor these postings for hits per posting, number of applications received, and time to hire and provide that data back to the respective departments.</i> • Connect with Millennial and Gen Z candidates • Be clear, engaging, and mission-driven • Utilize title options that highlight the role's purpose, impact, or value that are attention-grabbing and skimmable • Utilize images or videos to promote the role on job boards, career pages, and social media • Highlight the job description in a friendly voice • Use short, scannable bullets; keep the language simple, and putting the most meaningful, mission-focused responsibilities at the top • Mobile device friendly • Avoid jargon or vague phrases • End with a call-to-action; a clear, welcoming invitation that highlights what happens next (e.g., "Apply today to start making an impact in your community!")
Recommendation #4.2	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #4 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

<p>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.</p>	<p>Agree: See #1. above.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<p>Implementation in Progress</p>	<p><i>ACCGov engaged with Segal, for a Comprehensive Compensation and Classification Study for the Unified Pay Table. Job description review and updates is a part of this study. The study will move to the market phase in November 2025, and the study is anticipated to be completed in late Q3/early Q4 FY26. As part of this study, skills/education/experience requirements will be assessed and evaluated.</i></p> <p><i>HR Employment consistently participates in local college and high school career fairs (as well as community career fairs). We also invite departments to join us at these career fairs. In 2024, we attended 4, and in 2025 9 fairs have been attended to date with the next occurring on December 1, 2025.</i></p> <p><i>Human Resources is part of the collaborative work group to create a Returning Residents program between ACCGov Departments and the ACCGov Diversion Center. This policy is still in process.</i></p> <p><i>Human Resources continued working with the Work-Based Learning (previously, Great Promise Partnership) Program in the Clarke County School District through July 2025. At that time the program ended and Human Resources sought approval to utilize those funds to continue working with the Clarke County School District's Work Based Learning (WBL) Program. In this transition, we are in the process of creating a resource book that will align ACCGov apprenticeship opportunities with the Clarke County School District's Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) pathways. This work is being completed by Human Resources WBL student with oversight of HR generalists. We have met regularly with the Clarke County School District's WBL Coordinators and CCSD Workforce Development Coordinator. In the meetings and through regular email, we have aligned our positions to 16 CTAE pathways which includes 23 different departments (see attached spreadsheet). There is also a general pathway that would allow students the opportunity to work within any department of ACCGov. Clarke County School District's WBL Coordinators and CCSD Workforce Development Coordinator attended the 10/2025 department director meeting to present information about the Work Based Learning Program and the CTAE pathways. See attached spreadsheet for students per semester to date. We have hired 9 students into ACCGov positions following GPP student experience since 2020.</i></p> <p><i>HR Employment staff are currently working on pilot testing 4 positions using a more attractive job posting that will accomplish the following. We will monitor these postings for hits per posting, number of applications received, and time to hire and provide that data back to the respective departments.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with Millennial and Gen Z candidates • Be clear, engaging, and mission-driven • Utilize title options that highlight the role's purpose, impact, or value that are attention-grabbing and skimmable • Utilize images or videos to promote the role on job boards, career pages, and social media • Highlight the job description in a friendly voice • Use short, scannable bullets; keep the language simple, and putting the most meaningful, mission-focused responsibilities at the top • Mobile device friendly • Avoid jargon or vague phrases • End with a call-to-action; a clear, welcoming invitation that highlights what happens next (e.g., "Apply today to start making an impact in your community!")
<p>Recommendation #4.3</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p> <p>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 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.</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p> <p><i>Recommendation Not Pursued</i></p>	<p>Further detail regarding Recommendation #4 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)</p> <p><i>Disagreed</i></p>
<p>Recommendation #4.4</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p>	<p>Further detail regarding Recommendation #4 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)</p>

<p>Consider accepting paper applications, or, have HR Generalists make field visits to accept applications for or 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, 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.</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<p><i>Recommendation Not Pursued</i></p>	<p><i>Please see 3.2 Response</i></p>
<p>Recommendation #4,5</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p>	<p>Further detail regarding Recommendation #4 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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 "pipeline" of talent. This would require M&C approval and department's collaboration to create apprentice positions in order for this to be successful.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	<p><i>Implementation Complete</i></p>	<p><i>Please see response for 4.1 & 4.2</i></p>

Finding #5	Observation		
Employee retention lacks defined goals.	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 #5.1 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.	Departmental Response (2024) 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. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: See Finding #3, action item #1.	Departmental Update (2025) Implementation Complete	Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025) <i>Results from the Employee Survey identified health insurance costs as one of the top concerns among employees. Benchmarking data further confirmed that the organization's cost-sharing structure was not competitive with comparable employers. In response, beginning in calendar year 2023, ACCGov implemented adjustments to align the employee cost share with industry benchmarks. Health insurance rates have remained stable from 2023 through 2026, resulting in an improvement in the average employer cost share from 65% to 73%. The long-term goal is to achieve a 75% employer contribution toward employee health insurance coverage.</i> <i>Every employee will receive a Total Compensation Statement that will provide an overview of the value of salary, benefits, and employer contributions. Information for the Total Compensation Statement (TCS) was submitted to EPIC, the vendor, at the end of September 2025. EPIC has committed to a projected release date for Early November, at which time the information will be distributed to all benefits-eligible ACCGov employees.</i> <i>We are currently tracking the total number of wellness participants, and the total amount of earnings provided each fiscal year to ACCGov employees for WELL and HSAs. Please see data for FY25 and FY26 YTD below.</i> <i>FY25 = 640 Active Participants FY26 To date = 494 Active Participants</i> <i>327 depositing funds in their HAS 251 depositing funds in their HSA</i> <i>357 receiving rewards in their paycheck 248 receiving rewards in their paycheck</i> <i>FY25 – WELL Earning = \$ 97,325.00 FY26 – WELL Earnings = \$ 45,240.00</i> <i>FY25 – HSA Well Earning = \$ 101,740.00 FY26 – HSA Well Earnings = \$ 51,455.00</i>
Recommendation #5.2 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.	Departmental Response (2024) 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. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: HR is willing to be a part of this effort but does not agree that we should lead it.	Departmental Update (2025) Recommendation Not Pursued	Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025) <i>November 3, 2025, Segal, LLC, will initiate the classification and compensation benchmark community peer survey. The study is anticipated to be completed and presented to the Mayor & Commission late Q3 FY26/early Q4 FY26.</i>
Recommendation #5.3 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 position can assure continuity of HR functions, leading to greater employee retention.	Departmental Response (2024) 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. DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.	Departmental Update (2025) Implementation Complete	Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025) <i>Mayor & Commission approved a full-time position for Human Resources for FY26. The position, Human Resources Coordinator / Performance Management Program, was posted from 7/3/2025 – 7/17/2025. A candidate was selected and cleared for hire on 8/26/2025, with a start date of 9/8/2025. This employee has been working with Organizational Development to learn the PerPro system for the upcoming annual performance evaluation cycle and researching and screening other performance evaluation systems for the future.</i>
Recommendation #5.4	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Implementation Complete</p>	<p><i>Results from the Employee Survey identified health insurance costs as one of the top concerns among employees. Benchmarking data further confirmed that the organization's cost-sharing structure was not competitive with comparable employers. In response, beginning in calendar year 2023, ACCGov implemented adjustments to align the employee cost share with industry benchmarks. Health insurance rates have remained stable from 2023 through 2026, resulting in an improvement in the average employer cost share from 65% to 73%. The long-term goal is to achieve a 75% employer contribution toward employee health insurance coverage.</i></p> <p><i>Every employee will receive a Total Compensation Statement that will provide an overview of the value of salary, benefits, and employer contributions. Information for the Total Compensation Statement (TCS) was submitted to EPIC, the vendor, at the end of September 2025. EPIC has committed to a projected release date for Early November, at which time the information will be distributed to all benefits-eligible ACCGov employees.</i></p> <p><i>We are currently tracking the total number of wellness participants and the total amount of earnings provided each fiscal year to ACCGov employees for WELL and HSAs. Please see data for FY25 and FY26 YTD below.</i></p> <p><i>FY25 = 640 Active Participants FY26 To date = 494 Active Participants</i> <i>327 depositing funds in their HAS 251 depositing funds in their HSA</i> <i>357 receiving rewards in their paycheck 248 receiving rewards in their paycheck</i> <i>FY25 – WELL Earning = \$ 97,325.00 FY26 – WELL Earnings = \$ 45,240.00</i> <i>FY25 – HSA Well Earning = \$ 101,740.00 FY26 – HSA Well Earnings = \$ 51,455.00</i></p>
<p>Recommendation #5.5</p> <p>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 told this is the video sent out to all employees, whether they are full- or part-time, and the content 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.</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p> <p>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 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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p> <p>Implementation Complete</p>	<p>Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)</p> <p><i>Please see 1.2 response</i></p>
<p>Recommendation #5.6</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p> <p>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."</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p> <p>Recommendation Not Pursued</p>	<p>Further detail regarding Recommendation #5 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)</p> <p><i>Disagreed</i></p>
<p>Recommendation #5.7</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Departmental Response (2024)</p> <p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN:</p> <p>Departments may be addressed during upcoming Unified pay study.</p>	<p>Departmental Update (2025)</p> <p>Implementation in Progress</p>	<p>Compensation and Classification Study consultants, Segal, LLC, conducted a Job Description Questionnaire (JDQ) on 2/10/2025.</p> <p><i>Segal, LLC provided ACCGov spreadsheets for each department based on JDQ. Departments reviewed their spreadsheets on August 25, 2025 to review all department positions, address any concerns with positions, and define career ladders. Departments then met with Human Resources for any questions or guidance between September 8 – 26, 2025.</i></p>

Finding #6	Observation		
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.		
Recommendation #6.1	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #6 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	Disagree: See Finding #1, response #3.	Recommendation Not Pursued	Disagree
Recommendation #6.2	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #6 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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 1. 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 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Recommendation Not Pursued	Disagree
Recommendation #6.3	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #6 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)

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.	<p>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.</p> <p>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)</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	Implementation Complete	<p>Benefits Guide: https://www.accgov.com/6547/Current-Jobs On the landing page for ACCGov jobs, candidates have access to the links below that take them directly to both our 2025 Benefits Guide as well as the Wellness Program. The Benefits Guide provides overview information, website links, and pricing for all benefits. Once on this page, they have access to all benefits in more detail to include Retirement, Pension, and the Tuition Reimbursement Program.</p>
Recommendation #6.4	Departmental Response (2024)	Departmental Update (2025)	Further detail regarding Recommendation #6 and subsequent sub-recommendations (2025)
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.	<p>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.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF ACTION(S) TO BE TAKEN: 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.</p>	Implementation Complete	Please see 3.2 response.

Operational Analysis Follow-Up Observations - Comprehensive Performance Audit: Employee Recruitment, Hiring and Orientation (HR)	
Based on the responses from the Human Resources Department and a fieldwork visit to their office, the Operational Analysis Office makes the following observations:	
Finding 1: Recommendation #1	Training schedules have been posted and adjusted, as necessary
Finding 1: Recommendation #2	H.R. is presently building an onboarding/offboarding platform in NEOGOV.
Finding 1: Recommendation #3	Software updates are in-progress, and H.R. continues to hold in-person computer lab opportunities for applicants.
Finding 1: Recommendation #4	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 1: Recommendation #5	As software improvements are considered, H.R. continues to consult with experts, while also attending educational sessions on implementation techniques.
Finding 2: Recommendation #1	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 2: Recommendation #2	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 2: Recommendation #3	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 3: Recommendation #1	Transparency for the public to view relevant H.R. data externally has not been pursued.
Finding 3: Recommendation #2	Recommendation not pursued, as H.R. maintains status of support for recruitment, not the primary, responsible party.
Finding 4: Recommendation #1	Awaiting completion of the Comprehensive Compensation and Classification Study
Finding 4: Recommendation #2	Awaiting completion of the Comprehensive Compensation and Classification Study
Finding 4: Recommendation #3	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 4: Recommendation #4	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 4: Recommendation #5	Currently working on a pilot program to test and monitor implementation of more attractive job postings
Finding 5: Recommendation #1	Only (1) measurable goal has been provided for this recommendation.
Finding 5: Recommendation #2	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 5: Recommendation #3	A new F/T position of "H.R. Coordinator / Performance Management Program was approved in FY26 and hired
Finding 5: Recommendation #4	Health insurance premiums remained stable during FY26; however, no information on retirement or leave incentives was provided.
Finding 5: Recommendation #5	H.R. is presently building an onboarding/offboarding platform in NEOGOV.
Finding 5: Recommendation #6	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 5: Recommendation #7	Awaiting completion of the Comprehensive Compensation and Classification Study
Finding 6: Recommendation #1	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 6: Recommendation #2	Recommendation not pursued
Finding 6: Recommendation #3	The 2025 Benefits Guide is posted on the landing page of the recruitment webpage.
Finding 6: Recommendation #4	Recommendation not pursued, as H.R. maintains status of support for recruitment, not the primary, responsible party.