



Subject: Recruitment and Selection  
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Department: Human Resources  
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas Benfield".

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*City Manager*

**To All City Employees:**

**I. Purpose**

In accordance with Article II of the Code of the City of Durham, North Carolina, the City has established a personnel system under the supervision of the City Manager with the intent of conducting a fair and uniform system of personnel administration. Uniform procedures are necessary to ensure the recruitment and selection of qualified persons according to the merit principle of personnel administration and concept of affirmative action.

**II. Policy**

It is the policy of the City of Durham to assure that equal employment opportunity is afforded to all without regard to race, religion, age, sex, disability, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity or genetic information. The City of Durham believes that hiring qualified individuals based on education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities to fill positions contributes to the overall strategic success of the City. Each employee, while employed, is hired to make significant, positive, contributions to the City of Durham through that employment.

In hiring the most qualified applicants for positions, the following hiring process will be used. Procedures and letters may be changed periodically based on the needs of the organization without changing the entire policy. The Director of Human Resources and Department Directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with these hiring procedures and practices.

**III. Definitions**

**Applicant** – The individual that has submitted an expression of interest in employment by completing an application through the City’s Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

**Applicant Tracking System (ATS)** – A software application that enables the electronic handling of recruitment needs and employment applications.

**At-will Probationary Period** – Initial employment period when newly hired employees can be dismissed from employment for any reason that is not an illegal reason.

**Conditional or contingent** – Something that is not yet certain because it depends on the existence or occurrence of another thing or event.

**Follow-up Question** – A question asked to get a better understanding following an applicant response that was missing detail (e.g., What exactly did you do? Were your efforts successful? What was your role on the project?).

**Hiring Manager** – The individual who will ultimately be the direct manager of the new hire.

**Internal Candidates** – Employees who are full time, temporary with or without benefits, part time, or working as an emergency hire.

**Performance Probationary Period** – A performance assessment period for employees who have changed jobs to allow sufficient opportunity for training, feedback, coaching and development in their new role.

**Personnel Requisition** – An online request to post and/or fill a vacant position.

**Structured Interview** – An interview where the interviewer asks a specific set of questions of all applicants for a particular position. The main purpose of structured interviewing is to pinpoint job skills that are essential to the position.

#### **IV. Procedure**

##### **A. Applicant Tracking System**

1. The City of Durham uses an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) to electronically manage the recruitment and selection process.
2. Resumes and employment inquires made outside of the ATS cannot be considered.

## B. Personnel Requisitions

1. A personnel requisition must be completed in the ATS in order to fill vacant positions.
2. The hiring manager should consult with Human Resources in advance of creating a personnel requisition if the job description needs to be updated.
3. All fields of the personnel requisition should be completed, and the hiring manager must ensure that the job description is current and accurate.
4. Requisitions may be initiated by a supervisor or manager, but must be approved electronically by the Department Director (or designee) prior to forwarding to the Human Resources Department.

## C. Job Postings

1. All job openings, except emergency hires, are posted on the employment section of the City's internet website.
2. Hiring managers will determine if the job posting will be posted externally or as internal only.
3. Job postings should contain any information critical for applicants to know, such as: Irregular schedules, hiring range, deadlines for required certifications, subject to on-call or emergency call-back, or requirement for work during severe weather/emergency conditions.
4. Jobs will remain posted until the closing date. All positions, except Emergency Hires, must be posted for a minimum of five (5) calendar days. Postings listed as "Continuous" or "open until filled" can be removed from the website after 5 days without any advanced notice at the discretion of the hiring manager. If a hiring manager would like to change a posting with a specific defined end date, a director's written approval will be needed; positions still must be posted for the minimum 5 day period.

## D. Applicant Selection

1. Applicants must meet the minimum qualifications for the position for which they applied to be considered. Hiring managers can indicate specific preferred skills, certifications or experience that can also be used to pre-screen applicants.
2. For some positions, the hiring manager may wish to offset the minimum educational qualification if the applicant has additional years of related work experience; this is referred to as an "Equivalency. Guidelines for using equivalencies are attached.
3. Only the applicants meeting the minimum qualifications and hiring manager preferences will be referred to the hiring manager for review.

4. Hiring managers are not required to phone screen or interview all of the applicants that meet the minimum qualifications and manager preferences. Some positions generate large numbers of applicants, and interviewing each referral would be impractical. The hiring manager(s) should interview only the qualified applicants who possess the mix of skills and experience that would add the most value to the department, and would make the applicant successful in the position.

#### E. Internal Candidates

1. Internal Candidates may apply for any posted position.
2. Completion of the probationary period is not required prior to applying for a posted position. Employees must apply by completing an application on the City of Durham website. The application must be completed and submitted before the closing date for the position.
3. All applicants must meet the minimum requirements and hiring manager preferences for a posted vacancy to be considered. Applicants are considered on the basis of their qualifications as compared to those of other applicants in the applicant pool.
4. Once identified as a finalist for the position, internal candidates will have their references checked including the employee's direct supervisor and/or other supervisors the employee may have had while employed by the City.
5. Once an employee transfers to a new position, the employee will enter into a performance probationary period for the new position.

#### F. Recruitment Advertising

1. The Human Resources Department is responsible for advertising the job on the employment section of the City of Durham website.
2. Positions can be advertised externally based upon need and available budget.
3. The requesting department is responsible for payment for external advertisement. External advertisements placed by departments must be reviewed by a Human Resources Department representative prior to placement.
4. External advertisements should not be placed until the position is officially posted on the City's website.

#### G. Interview Process

1. The hiring manager with assistance from the Human Resources staff (if the hiring manager desires), will screen applications and/or resumes prior to scheduling interviews. Phone screenings with applicants are strongly encouraged to further narrow the applicant pool.

2. Initial interviews may be conducted either by:
  - a. One on One interview with hiring manager
  - b. Panel interviews as needed for some positions
  - c. Video interviewStructured interviews are required; however, follow up questions are allowed and encouraged. This straightforward approach makes it easier for the interviewer to evaluate and compare applicants fairly.
3. Human Resources staff members are available to provide technical assistance in interview question development, assessment center process development and coordination.
4. Interview notes used in the hiring process must be maintained by the hiring department for a minimum of three (3) years.
5. The hiring manager is responsible for making sure that all interview panels are diverse and inclusive.
6. The hiring manager or supervisor has ultimate responsibility for making a hiring recommendation; the Department Director has the final hiring decision.
7. Hiring managers are responsible for providing a disposition code/reason in the ATS for every applicant, including indicating which candidates were selected for interview. Hiring managers will provide the final disposition code/reason within seven calendar days (7) of receiving the verbal acceptance from the selected applicant.
8. To better inform waiting applicants of the position's status, it is critical that hiring managers review and assign dispositions for applicants as quickly as possible. Applicants that are rejected during the hiring manager's initial screening process will be notified by Human Resources periodically. Human Resources will notify all remaining applicants who are not selected for each position upon notification from the hiring manager that the position has been successfully filled.
9. Hiring managers are responsible for attaching the following items in the ATS:
  - a. All interview notes
  - b. A list of panel members
  - c. A list of interview questions
  - d. Reference forms and reference checking notes

## H. Reference Checks, Background Checks, and Drug Testing, Physical Exam

1. The hiring manager will check references for all internal and external finalists, prior to routing the hire approval form. Finalists are the top candidates identified for the position. One to a **maximum** of three finalists may be identified for each open position.
  - a. Three references are required to be provided by candidates and these references should be contacted by the hiring manager.
  - b. Three attempts are to be made to contact each reference. In the event that a hiring manager is unable to contact all three references, a minimum of two reference checks are required. If unable to contact and conduct the required minimum of two reference checks, the hiring manager will contact the applicant for additional references.
  - c. If a letter of recommendation is provided in lieu of a reference, a hiring manager will contact and confirm the letter of recommendation.
  - d. Professional references are strongly preferred, in some instances personal references will be accepted such as references from former professors, teachers, or volunteer work supervisors, if the candidate has no, or very limited, work experience.
2. For Internal Candidates or candidates that previously employed by the city, the hiring manager will contact the selected employee's direct supervisor and/or other supervisors the employee may have had while employed by the City. These current or previous supervisors can be used as the required references, but still the minimum must be completed (Three references are required, and two references must be successfully contacted).
3. Reference forms, reference checking notes, or other reference documentation are to be attached to the approval to hire form in the applicant tracking system.
4. Once the hiring manager completes and routes the hire request in the ATS and approvals are received, Human Resources will issue the selected applicant a conditional offer of employment within one (1) business day, when applicable. For high volume recruitment initiatives, department representatives may work with HR to extend conditional offers. Under some circumstances, an offer may not be extended due to restrictions.
5. Human Resources will also provide the appropriate information to the applicant for completion of substance abuse testing and, if applicable, a physical exam. For high volume recruitment initiatives, department representatives may work with Human Resource to provide pre-employment testing information. No pre-employment testing may occur until an applicant has been given a conditional offer of employment. Exceptions to this part of the policy include positions that are financially sensitive, are in direct contact with minors, or Public Safety positions. (Please see the Background Investigation policy HRM-300.)

6. Release forms must be completed prior to conducting background checks for both internal and external candidates. (Please see the Background Investigation policy HRM300 for details).
7. Employment with the City of Durham will be made contingent upon successful clearance of reference checks, educational verification, background checks, and substance abuse testing. There may be other conditions that are applicable depending on the requirements of the position (e.g., Physical exam, TB testing, credit check, etc.).

#### I. Security of Information

1. Human Resources is responsible for securing information such as Social Security Numbers, birthdates and addresses received for conducting background checks, educational verification, etc. Exceptions to this provision should be discussed with Human Resources prior to collection of this information, and the request will be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Human Resources is also responsible for ensuring that after the three-year period, the information is shredded or otherwise destroyed to reduce the possibility of identity theft.

#### J. Confirming Job Offers

Once the hiring supervisor receives clearance from Human Resources, the hiring manager/supervisor may confirm the job offer with the applicant.

#### K. New Hire Pay

1. Department Directors may hire individuals up to 20% above the minimum of the pay grade without City Manager approval. **Please note that due to compression of some positions, 20% over the minimum salary range may extend beyond the midpoint of the salary range and will therefore require approvals beyond the Department Director.** Human Resources will evaluate all salary offers. Salary approvals will be processed subject to the following:
  - a. The Department Director must approve the hire in the ATS and indicate the amount of salary approved.
  - b. There must be adequate budgeted funding to cover the salary.
  - c. The salary must not create or exacerbate pay equity or compression issues (this means the Director must consider the pay/experience of the departments' current employees in making the salary recommendations. Human Resources will review the offer for cross-departmental equity).
  - d. There must be written justification for salary exceptions (this can be added into the hire approval form in the ATS).

2. All approvals must be obtained prior to a job offer being made.
3. Department Directors are responsible for ensuring consistency in hiring individuals above the minimum rate. For salary offers more than 20% above the minimum up to and including the midpoint:
  - a. The Deputy City Manager must approve in the ATS.
  - b. The justification for the higher salary must be forwarded through the Human Resources Department based on the procedure indicated in (1) above.
4. For salaries above the midpoint and other pay exceptions:
  - a. The City Manager must approve in the ATS.
  - b. The justification for the higher salary must be forwarded through the Human Resources Department based on the procedure indicated in (1) above.

#### L. Orientation

1. New employees are required to participate in New Employee Orientation (NEO) on their first day of employment.
2. Every effort shall be made to allow the employee's start date to align with a day when NEO is being held. Please refer to the HR CODI page for specific times and dates of upcoming NEO's. If a new hire is not able to attend NEO on his/her first day, he/she must complete NEO within two weeks from their hire date.
3. New employees should also be oriented to their particular job and department by the supervisor (or designee), including an overview of departmental policy and procedures.

#### V. Other

Technical Assistance is available from the Human Resources Department.

#### VI. Attachments

[Education Equivalencies.pptx](#)

[Hiring a New Employee Guide.pdf](#)

[NeoGov FAQ.pdf](#)

[Pre-Employment Testing.pdf](#)

[Sample Reference Form](#)



[Pre-Employment%20Testing.pdf](#)