

Faster Recruiting Process

Agency: The Department of Ecology

Project Impact

The Department of Ecology's Water Quality Program revamped its hiring process, resulting in a dramatic decrease in the time to hire new staff from an average of 180 days to an average of 60 days.

Project Summary

Before January 2017, hiring managers in the Water Quality Program took six to nine months to fill vacant positions. As a result, the program had a double-digit vacancy rate. Staff morale was low when surveyed in 2014 and 2015. Based on what we heard from staff, we believe this was partly because of our inability to fill positions in a timely manner.



- Between year one and year two of the 2015-17 Biennium, the vacancy rate went from 14 percent to seven percent. This reduction means we have the needed staff resources to do critical work, and the work is spread out more evenly among staff.
- When we develop timeframes and define responsibilities around hiring, managers know what is expected and they have the resources to move quickly.
- Improvements to our process result in fewer applicant withdrawals; we are in the process of compiling data on this result.

Before January 2017, it took 180 days or more to hire new staff compared to our target of 60 days, which we achieved by April of 2017 and have sustained through 2018.

We forecasted vacancy savings and invested a portion of that money into hiring a Human Resources Consultant who reviews hiring paperwork, collects data, and helps to improve the hiring process from the first step to the last. In partnership with the Human Resources office, we improved the Water Quality Program hiring process by:

- Mapping out the steps in the process to reach the 60 day target and who was responsible for each step.
- Setting up a new tracking system to gather data on how long each key step in the hiring process takes.
- Providing resources on SharePoint, organized in order of key steps – including templates for cover memos and other human resources paperwork.
- Developing trainings on how to write position/ job descriptions for all hiring managers.
- Communicating the new 60 day target and the reason behind it clearly and effectively in trainings and evaluations.
- Planning and holding time for career reviews (job screenings), interview panels, and reference checks in advance.

Project Results

 Time	Decreased time to hire new staff from an average of 180 days to 60 days.	→	From April 2017 to Sept. 2018, we have saved an average of 120 days in hiring time per position. We have used the new process to hire 100 positions for a total of 12,000 days saved.
 Quality	Decreased the vacancy rate from 14 percent to seven percent.	→	Results achieved between year one and year two of the 2015-17 Biennium.

Project Details

Date improvement project was initiated: 1/1/2017

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