WHAT'S NEW IN HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAMS?

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The 45-Day Hiring Model and Quick Hire

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently issued a press release announcing that—consistent with its own guidance to Federal agencies—it has overhauled its internal hiring processes. The result was that it successfully hired 278 employees over a period of nine months at an average of 36 workdays per hire. The hiring time is defined as beginning one day after the vacancy announcement closed and ending on the day an offer was made to an applicant. This average was less than the 45-day model that OPM has been urging agencies to adopt and 16 days less for hiring in a comparable nine-month period before OPM implemented the new hiring procedures and flexibilities.

The Department of Commerce announced that it has partnered with Monster Government Solutions for use of their Quick Hire automated hiring system, as well as their consultation, job analysis and marketing services. The Department has offered training classes to Human Resources Specialists in August and others will be offered in the future. The Office of the Secretary's Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) plans to implement use of Quick Hire at the end of August. The OHRM in the International Trade Administration (ITA) is tentatively scheduled to begin using it at the end of September. By converting to Quick Hire, the costs associated with upgrading COOL so that it is fully integrated into USAJOBS are eliminated. The costs of operating Quick Hire are also significantly less than those for COOL. If you have any questions about Quick Hire, please contact Rita Clinton on 202-482-2501 or at Rita_Clinton@ita.doc.gov or Ruben Pedroza on 202-482-3072 or at Ruben_Pedroza@ita.doc.gov.

Learning Initiatives

ITA's OHRM has recently launched two important no-cost learning initiatives. The first is the Leadership School, which offers classes that are open to all employees, but supervisors will have priority. A few classes are now scheduled for September. Integrating Budget and Performance is a one-day class at which participants will learn how to link their organization's financial and performance measures. This will be given on September 16, 2004. Leading Change is a two-day change management course that uses research-based change management methodology and exercises. The class will meet on September 8-9, 2004. Presentation Skills is a three-day course that assists supervisors and managers to improve their presentation and briefing skills. The course will be given from September 28-30, 2004. Project Management is a highly interactive two-day seminar that takes participants from the basics of project management through state-of-the-art automated project management using Microsoft Project software. The course will be given from September 1-2 and again from September 21-22, 2004. Systemic Leadership and Management is a 1 and ½ day interactive course that takes an in-depth look at leadership and management characteristics, traits and behaviors. The course will be given September 14-15, 2004. All classes will meet in H4064. Please contact Anesia Robinson at 202-482-1380 or at Anesia_Robinson@ita.doc.gov for more information about the classes. Additional Leadership School courses will be offered throughout the year.

The other learning initiative that OHRM has implemented is the Department's Learning Management System (LMS), which is a relatively new strategy for acquiring knowledge and training that is needed to succeed. The system uses multimedia technology—video, computer, the World Wide Web and Internet chat capabilities. There are hundreds of courses to choose from among forty broad categories, including Management, Project Management, PC and Business Application and Communications. To view a

free demonstration and to learn more about LMS, go to http://e-learning.doc.gov/hq/. If you have any additional questions, please contact Marlene Mitchell at 202-482-1556 or Marlene_Mitchell@ita.doc.gov.

Pay for Performance

The Coalition for Effective Change (CEC), which is composed of 30 groups that represent current and retired Federal managers and executives, issued a report in August 2004 that endorsed a proposal to link employee pay with performance throughout the Federal sector. The report said that the CEC realizes the "difficulty of the task associated with the tremendous culture change." It is the experience of their members that "the manner in which a performance management system is administered determines whether the system achieves the intended stimulus for performance excellence and improvement." The CEC report stated that the system must be credible to those who administer it as well as those who are covered by it or the initiative will fail.

The report outlined a number of elements and prerequisites for designing and implementing a successful pay-for-performance system. These include such things as adherence to merit principles; a fair and transparent employee appraisal system; training and retraining of supervisors and employees; a process for ongoing employee feedback throughout the appraisal period; effective safeguards to ensure the system is fair; employee involvement in the system design; linkage between the performance management system, the employee appraisal system and the agency's strategic plan; and adequate resources allocated to the design, implementation and administration of the system. The CEC also said that other factors are fundamental to any effective system for linking pay and performance. These are: gaining consensus on the basis for rewards and corrective actions; allowing for the exercise of reasonable judgment; flexibility; third party review; periodic evaluation and adjustment; and adequate funding for performance awards. To read the whole CEC report on pay-for-performance systems, go to http://www.effectivechange.org/CECPublications/html and then click on the link for CEC Pay for Performance Report 08-12-04.

Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Open Season

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the FEGLI program, OPM has announced that there will be an open season from September 1 through September 30, 2004. Effective September 1st, OPM will open a website to which employees can get information on the Open Season. That website will be www.fegli.gov.

There will also be a series of communications, through weekly emails to employees, on the FEGLI program. Elections under FEGLI will not be effective until the first pay period after September 1, 2005. Until the special FEGLI Open Season website is available, employees can go to http://www.opm.gov/insure/life. If you have any questions or want additional information on FEGLI, contact Vanessa Lewis on 202-482-8327 or at Vanessa_Lewis@ita.doc.gov or contact Dottie Bowling at 202-482-3504 or Dottie_Bowling@ita.doc.gov.

Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities

The Department's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has as its current featured topic a report issued by the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (OEDP) that provides Federal officials and workers with recommendations to ensure a safe and secure environment for the more than 120,000 Federal employees with disabilities. *Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities: An Interagency Seminar of Exchange for Federal Managers* is the 80-page report issued from a symposium that was held in December 2003. The need for addressing these special emergency needs were highlighted in the wake of the experiences of many disabled people in New York City and Washington, DC who tried to evacuate the buildings that were struck on September 11, 2001. "The ability to evacuate and/or find shelter during an emergency situation for an employee with disabilities can be a daunting task not only for the person with the disability, but also for the employer."

The report stresses the prevailing themes of the Seminar: communications with all employees is paramount to developing, implementing, and maintaining an emergency preparedness plan that addresses the unique needs of employees with disabilities; an effective plan requires support and commitment of budget and human resources by senior-level management; the emergency preparedness plan must be as flexible as possible; and rigorous practice of the emergency plan on a regular basis with all employees is critical. To read the whole report go to www.osec.doc.gov/ocr/ and click on View the full report on the Department of Labor's website. This important report can also be accessed by going directly at the Department of Labor's website at http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/ep/index.htm. Commerce employees can also link on the Evacuation Handbook for Herbert C. Hoover Building at the Department's Intranet site at http://home.commerce.gov/osy/.

Emergency Preparedness

There are several government websites that provide information on emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures. The Department's evacuation handbook is at http://home.commerce.gov/osy/. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has a substantial amount of valuable information on what to do in an emergency including publications that can be downloaded from the website www.ready.gov. There is information on what to put in an emergency kit. There is good advice on making a plan of what needs to be done in an emergency whether it occurs at work and/or at home. For example, local telephone service may be disrupted in an emergency. DHS suggests that the family agree on an out-of state-contact that each family member can contact in case of an emergency. That contact can let the family members know each person's status and location. Your planning should take into account the various types of emergencies or threats that may occur. Different situations may require different actions. Finally, the District of Columbia has a website that describes the evacuation procedures from downtown. The website is http://emergencycenter.dc.gov/eia/site/default.asp. Under the District's evacuation plan, Pennsylvania Avenue between Rock Creek Park and the U.S. Capitol will serve as the dividing line for exiting the city. If an evacuation is ordered, motorists north of Pennsylvania Avenue will be directed North, East and West on designated radial evacuation routes; motorists south of Pennsylvania Avenue will be directed South, East and West on the radial evacuation routes. Officials in the Metropolitan Washington area have identified twenty-five (25) corridors radiating from downtown Washington, DC as emergency event/evacuation routes. There will be specific signs on each street and the traffic lights will be timed to expedite the evacuation process. To learn more about this, after you click on the link above, click on Evacuation Routes on the right side of the page. After reading the Emergency Preparedness information, you can click on Evacuation/Event Routes Map to see the 25 evacuation routes. If you want more information on emergency preparedness, contact Tony Proctor on 202-482-2384 or at Tony_Proctor@ita.doc.gov.

Health and Fitness

The National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health has some very valuable information on exercise, physical fitness, alternative therapies, nutrition and related issues. There are links for all of these topics as well as links for information on research on physical fitness; dictionaries/glossaries on physical activity; a state-based directory of physical activity programs; governmental organizations; and newsletters/print publication. The link for this information at the National Library of Medicine is http://nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/exerciseandphysicalfitness.html. There are additional links on the first page to other MedlinePlus related pages such as information on exercise for children; exercise for seniors; sports fitness and wellness and lifestyle.

Women's Equality Day

Thursday, August 26, 2004 marks the 84th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which gave American women the right to vote in all elections in the United States.

For Questions or Comments about 'What's New In Human Resources Programs?' please contact Marcia Tyler at 202.482.3166 or Marcia_Tyler@ita.doc.gov.

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