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DEPARTMENT OF
PERSONNEL

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DIRECTOR OF
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Budget and Finance Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: TIME REQUIRED TO FILL POSITIONS AND EFFECTS OF PERSONNEL
STAFFING SHORTFALL

SUMMARY

The time it takes to fill positions ranges from a few weeks to several years. The effects of the Personnel staffing shortfall include increased use of overtime and "out of class" pay, inappropriately paid employees, minimal affirmative action recruitment, and various other problems. We are able to meet the most critical of the highest priority needs of departments. However, Personnel's staffing is, as with other City Departments, a level of service issue.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

At the hearing on the Personnel Department budget, the Committee requested reports back on the time it takes to fill positions and the effects of the Personnel Department staffing shortfall. Since these items are related, we are combining them in one report.

Time required to fill positions: It takes from a few weeks to several years to fill positions, depending on whether an eligible list exists and if not, the priority set by the hiring department for giving an examination to create an eligible list.

If an eligible list exists, it takes one to two weeks to contact referrals and have them set up an interview with the hiring department. Then, depending on whether the person hired has to give notice to a current employer, it can take from a few days to a few weeks for the new employee to start.

If no eligible list exists, it takes from three months to several years to fill a position, depending on the priority the hiring department assigns to filling the position. We operate under a performance contract concept with departments. At the beginning of each fiscal year, we give each department a set number of Personnel staff hours, and we tell departments

how many staff hours it takes to do examinations and classification studies. Then, departments identify the examinations and class studies they'll need in the upcoming year, determine whether sufficient Personnel staff hours exist to cover their needs, and prioritize their needs. The reason we let departments prioritize their needs, as opposed to our determining the priorities, is that the departments are in the best position to decide what they need most.

Under the "best case", if a department assigns first priority to a particular examination to fill a position, it takes about three months to do the recruitment, administer the examination, and refer eligibles. If a new classification is needed before the examination can be given, a minimum of an extra two months is added for civil service classes. The two months includes time to study the positions; develop class specifications; obtain union agreement; have Civil Service Board hearings; and have City Council action.

Under the "worst case", if a department assigns low priority to an examination, it can take literally years to fill a position on a permanent basis. The reason for this is that the examination and classification needs of departments considerably exceed Personnel's resources. There are many cases, particularly in Public Works and Parks and Community Services, where medium to low priority examinations and classification studies have been on our "to do" list for years, and do not have a definite date by when they will be done. We typically are able to do about half the examinations and classification studies needed by these departments each year. Since these two departments account for over 40% of positions in the City, we are not meeting the needs of a large segment of the City.

Effects of Personnel Staffing Shortfall: Although we are doing a good job, we clearly are understaffed. For the Committee's information, we have attached a survey of Personnel Analyst staffing in our survey cities. As can be seen, we have the leanest ratio of Analysts to employees, and would have to double our staff just to get up to the average. It should be noted that between the 1984/85 and proposed 1989/90 budgets, the number of full time positions has increased by over 700 positions - from about 3200 to 3900. The number of Analysts has remained the same - 5. This compounds the backlog of work we already had.

The effects of the staffing shortfall include:

- Increased use of overtime and "out of class" pay. In order to get the job done until career appointments can be made to fill positions, departments work existing employees overtime and above (or below) their classification. This can cost a good deal more than if the positions were filled with career appointments.

- Inappropriately paid employees. The first priority in almost all departments is to get positions filled. The result is that classification

studies tend not to get done. The idea, understandably, is that it is more important to have the positions filled and the work getting done, than to have all positions correctly classified. This can cause poor morale and turnover, which lessen productivity.

- Reduced affirmative action recruitment. One of our priorities is to increase the number of women and minorities in underrepresented classifications. The Mayor's Affirmative Action Advisory Committee continues to press this as a priority. However, such recruitments take about 40 hours of staff time, and given the even higher priority of just getting eligible lists established and positions filled, such outreach falls by the wayside.

- Miscellaneous problems. For example, since we are unable to fill many positions on a career basis for a lengthy time, temporary appointments are made. It is often difficult, especially if we have to recruit from outside the City workforce, to find someone who will leave a job and take a temporary one with the City. Such people are gambling that they will pass and be reachable on the eligible list when the examination is finally given. At the same time, this runs contrary to the merit principle, since temporary appointments do not result from an open competitive process, and a temporary employee tends to have an advantage in an examination by virtue of having been in the position. Another example is that since we concentrate our resources on filling positions, we are unable to devote needed time to training City employees in such areas as conducting hiring interviews in a job-related, bias free manner. Also, the quality of our exams suffers - we tend to recycle previous exam material and not to do the background job analysis that really should be done. The effect of this is that the quality of employees we give departments suffers. Finally, the Personnel Analysts experience a high degree of frustration, always juggling priorities and having two new requests replace the one they just completed. And, as new programs are added and existing ones expanded, we are able to handle fewer and fewer of the needs of departments.

We do have enough resources to meet the most critical of the highest priorities. For example, we are able to conduct most public safety employee examinations on a timely basis, and we meet many of the other needs of the Police and Fire departments. We are able to fill some of the basic, core positions in other departments.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

No impact.

POLICY ISSUES

No impact.

MBE/WBE IMPACT

No impact.

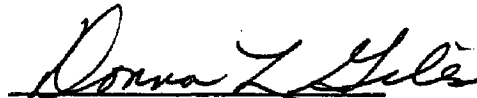
CONCLUSION

Personnel Department staffing is a level of service issue, which most City departments face. With existing staff we're able to meet the most critical needs of the most visible City departments, and they in turn are able to meet the most important needs of the citizens.

RECOMMENDATION

This information is submitted in response to the Committee's request, and no recommendation is made.

Respectfully Submitted,



Donna L. Giles
Director of Personnel

Approved for Council Information:



Jack Crist
Deputy City Manager

PERSONNEL ANALYST STAFFING IN
THE SIX SURVEY CITIES, SACRAMENTO COUNTY, AND SMUD

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Number of Analysts</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
SMUD	13*	3,100	1:238
Santa Ana	6	1,585	1:264
Oakland	11	3,457	1:311
Anaheim	6	1,980	1:360
Fresno	6	2,535	1:422
San Jose	10	4,876	1:487
Sacramento County	17**	8,500	1:500
Long Beach	9	5,000	1:555
Average	9	3,879	1:397

Sacramento City	5	3,900	1:780

*This understates the commitment of resources because SMUD has a very large contract with a consulting firm to provide testing and recruitment for Rancho Seco positions.

**10 positions are in the Personnel Department, and 7 are in departments. Two additional positions are likely to be added in departments in the new budget.

Personnel staffing included in this survey are analysts who work on recruitment, testing, and classification and pay. Labor relations, benefits, safety, etc. staff were not included.