



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Board of Supervisors Response to Grand Jury Report "New Recruiting Ideas for the Personnel Department..."

Caitlin Smith <Caitlin.Smith@santacruzcountyca.gov>

Tue, Sep 10, 2024 at 3:27 PM

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached for the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report "New Recruiting Ideas for the Personnel Department – Residents Deserve a Fully Staffed Workforce."

Best,

Caitlin C. Smith

County Supervisors' Analyst

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

[701 Ocean Street, Room 500](#)

[Santa Cruz, CA 95060](#)

831-454-2200 main

831-454-3516 direct

caitlin.smith@santacruzcountyca.gov

To email all five members of the Board of Supervisors at once,

please use: boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov

2 attachments



Cover Letter Recruiting Ideas for Personnel Department.pdf
195K



Response to Grand Jury report Recruiting Ideas for the Personnel Dept.pdf
323K



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 500, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4069
(831) 454-2200 FAX: (831) 454-3262 TDD/TTY - Call 711

MANU KOENIG
FIRST DISTRICT

ZACH FRIEND
SECOND DISTRICT

JUSTIN CUMMINGS
THIRD DISTRICT

FELIPE HERNANDEZ
FOURTH DISTRICT

BRUCE MCPHERSON
FIFTH DISTRICT

September 10, 2024

The Honorable Katherine Hansen
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Judge Hansen,

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report "New Recruiting Ideas for the Personnel Department – Residents Deserve a Fully Staffed Workforce."

Sincerely,

JUSTIN CUMMINGS, Chair
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

JC:cs
Attachments

CC: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



The 2023–2024 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requires the

Santa Cruz County Board Of Supervisors

to Respond by September 25, 2024

to the Findings and Recommendations listed below
which were assigned to them in the report titled

New Recruiting Ideas for the Personnel Department
Residents Deserve a Fully Staffed Workforce

Responses are **required** from elected officials, elected agency or department heads, and elected boards, councils, and committees which are investigated by the Grand Jury. The California Penal Code (PC) [§933\(c\)](#) requires you to respond as specified below and to keep your response on file.

Your response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. **For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **AGREE with the Finding**, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
 - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
2. **For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
3. **Please confirm the date on which you approved the assigned responses:**

We approved these responses in a regular public meeting as shown
in our minutes dated September 10, 2024.

4. **When your responses are complete, please email your completed Response Request as a PDF file attachment to both**

The Honorable Katherine Hansen, Grand Jury Supervising Judge
Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

If you have questions about this request form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F1. Requiring candidates for difficult to fill positions coordinate with Personnel rather than directly with hiring managers in departments slows the hiring process and reduces candidate interest.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

This statement is inaccurate. Once candidates are placed on eligible lists, department hiring supervisors take the lead in managing most aspects of the candidate experience, including interviews, reference checks, and conditional job offers.

There are certain portions of the hiring process that must be handled by Personnel, such as the scheduling of medical physicals, in-processing and fingerprints. However, these steps of the hiring process occur after the conditional job offer has been accepted.

With the implementation of the Workday Human Capital Management (HCM) system, some coordination points between Personnel and hiring managers will be more streamlined, including but not limited to:

- Centralized communication and tracking in which Workday provides a unified platform;
- Data visibility and reporting, whereby the platform's data visibility allows both Personnel and hiring managers to track key hiring metrics, monitor bottlenecks, and identify areas where delays are occurring, enabling proactive adjustments.

F2. The Personnel Department recruiter training does not provide recruiter skills to the hiring managers necessary in today's job market.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

A recruitment is a collaborative process between Personnel Department recruiters and department hiring managers. Personnel Department recruiters handle key tasks, while hiring managers provide operational expertise and specialized outreach based on their networks and industry connections. Together, Personnel recruiters and departmental hiring managers attend job fairs, informational marketing events, and are available to speak to interested job candidates about all the aspects of the job.

F3. Outdated personnel “candidate pool” rules and Civil Service recruiting policies inadvertently force long term vacancies for supervisory and credentialed positions.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

In June 2023, Personnel implemented a significant Civil Service change, shifting from the “rule of 10” to the “rule of the list,” allowing all candidates to be forwarded to hiring managers in rank order for interviews. This improvement is designed to reduce delays and ensure a more flexible and responsive hiring process.

F4. By not sending candidates for difficult to fill positions directly to hiring managers the chances of hiring well qualified candidates are reduced.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

For many difficult-to-recruit positions, such as Licensed Clinic Physicians and Psychiatrists, systems are already in place for rapid processing. Qualified applicants are forwarded to hiring managers within 24 hours of receipt, allowing immediate screening and expedited interviews.

The implementation of Workday will further support this process by automating candidate tracking and reducing manual touchpoints related to the hiring paperwork.

F5. Most county departments lack dedicated hiring managers leading to overloaded administrators.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

All departments have hiring managers, supported by administrative staff. Major departments such as the Health Services Agency (HSA), Human Services Department (HSD), Sheriff's Office, and Community Development and Infrastructure Division of Public Works (DPW) have dedicated recruiting analysts and personnel technicians.

The implementation of Workday will further alleviate administrative burdens by automating many routine hiring tasks.

F6. The Personnel Department has not changed policies and procedures in the face of fewer candidates applying for County positions resulting in additional vacancies and slower recruitment and hiring processes.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Recent updates include changing Civil Service Rules from a “rule of 10” to a “rule of the list” and reducing the interview contact notice period from 5 days to 3 days. Additionally, difficult-to-fill positions are now expedited. As soon as they are received, applications are forwarded to the hiring manager and screened for qualifications, which typically takes from one to three days. Recruiting strategies are continuously adjusted to reflect current job market conditions. These strategies include in-person and virtual informational sessions, community workshops, social media outreach, revised outreach plans, varied examination processes, and recruiter events held on both weekdays and weekends.

F7. The Personnel Department's website advertising continuous open positions without regular updates makes it very difficult for candidates to find opportunities on search engines because the information is stale and not up to date.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Continuous recruitments, which do not have final filing dates, are updated regularly. For difficult-to-fill positions, updates include changes to salary information and adding final filing dates as a marketing strategy to encourage candidates to apply sooner.

F8. Continuous improvement for promoting existing employees in departments with difficult to fill positions can help to maintain effective staffing levels.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Departments are encouraged to promote internally when a qualified candidate is available. However, to ensure a fair and equitable recruitment process, the focus remains on selecting the best-qualified candidate based on the entire hiring process, including the application, examination, interview, and reference checks. Hiring managers have the flexibility to choose the recruitment type, including promotional-only recruitments. We agree that recruitment tools to cultivate a promotional environment is important and they already exist.

F9. Promoting employees within departments with many difficult to fill positions can limit the damage caused by attrition, especially at more senior levels.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Departments have the flexibility to open recruitments to both non-County employees and internal candidates. Even when recruitments are open to external candidates, departments can request promotional-only lists if they prefer to prioritize internal candidates. We agree that recruitment tools to cultivate a promotional environment is important and they already exist.

F10. The months-long hiring process is frustrating to candidates and jeopardizes the County’s chances of hiring good candidates.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

While candidate experiences vary—some finding the process expedient while others perceive it as lengthy—the duration and type of recruitment are factors carefully considered by hiring departments during the planning and stages to meet their specific needs.

The Personnel Department has been continuously working on process improvements to reduce delays, but numerous factors influence the timeline, including:

- Civil service rules and mandatory examinations
- Noticing requirements
- Department availability for interviews
- Reference checks
- Compensation modifications requiring approval
- Candidate availability
- Candidates notice to current employer
- Fingerprinting, Driver’s License clearance, and physical clearances

F11. The time required for complex paper processes steals time from creative recruitment and ongoing contact with candidates.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Personnel Department continuously seeks ways to streamline and improve processes, including reducing the reliance on paper-based workflows. While there are ongoing opportunities for improvement, some departments already have effective systems in place that allow them to make quick hires despite the existing processes.

The transition to Workday will eliminate much of the paperwork and enable more creative and proactive recruitment strategies.

F12. Despite the finding in F9, having leadership in Personnel Department positions filled by long-time employees that have spent most of their career in the department has led to limited acceptance of ideas that have worked elsewhere in hiring for difficult to fill positions.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Leadership consistently promotes and implements innovative recruitment strategies for difficult-to-fill positions, such as hosting information sessions, organizing annual career fairs, offering new hiring and retention incentives, conducting community workshops, partnering with local agencies like Your Future is Our Business (YFIOB), and building talent pipelines by engaging with local students. However, some suggested strategies conflict with the principles of merit-based systems governed by Civil Service Rules. The perceived resistance to change is often a result of maintaining these principles, which necessitate certain checks and balances.

F13. The 8-county salary comparison in place since 2002 is no longer a useful benchmark for wages and salaries given the high cost of living in Santa Cruz County resulting in many vacancies.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The 8-county salary comparison remains a valuable tool as it considers total compensation, including county retirement contributions, base salary, FICA, cash compensation, and contributions for health, dental, life, vision, and long-term disability benefits. These comprehensive comparisons provide a well-rounded basis for setting salaries based on comparable elements such as geography, size of Counties, demographics, and service models.

F14. To attract a wider pool of candidates for difficult to fill positions, pay needs to be at least 90% of what Santa Clara County offers.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Santa Clara County benefits from a significantly larger property tax allocation, which allows them to provide higher compensation. They serve a small unincorporated population (4% of the county) while receiving California's highest per capita property tax allocation (over \$10,000 per unincorporated). In contrast, Santa Cruz County has one of the lowest per capita property tax rates (under \$500), with tax dollars spread to directly serve 50% of our population living in unincorporated areas. Given these financial realities, it is not feasible to match Santa Clara County's pay scales while maintaining our service levels.

F15. The County Personnel Department was consistently unable to provide comprehensive hiring statistics. Without accurate data, Personnel and other departments cannot make sound judgements on how to measure improvements in the hiring process for difficult to fill positions.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Grand Jury was provided with requested data on turnover, retention, and vacancies. Recruitment timeline data related to Personnel Department activities was available and offered, but it was not requested. The Grand Jury's request focused on hiring data that is the responsibility of individual departments, such as interviews, reference checks, and job offers. These stages occur after eligibility lists are forwarded and are not tracked directly by the Personnel Department.

F16. The Personnel Department expects the department units themselves to track hiring and recruitment metrics and keep important data such as turnover statistics and vacancy rates. This leaves the Personnel Department and oversight bodies without a clear picture of the situation and depth of the problem.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

As noted in F15, the Personnel Department already tracks key recruitment metrics, while departments are responsible for metrics related to their specific hiring activities, such as interviews, reference checks, and job offers. This division of responsibilities is intentional to ensure that department-specific data is managed by those directly involved in the hiring process.

With the implementation of Workday, tracking and reporting on hiring, turnover, and vacancy rates will be enhanced.

F17. By not filling essential positions for months at a time, services for residents suffer harm when vacancies persist.

AGREE

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

Recommendations

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, in order to reduce the backlog of difficult to fill positions, the Personnel Department creates dedicated recruiter positions for the HSA, HSD and Public Works departments. (F1–F5)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Dedicated recruiting teams have already been established for HSA, HSD, and DPW. The HSA team includes two recruiting Analysts and two Personnel Technicians. The HSD team consists of one recruiting Analyst and two Personnel Technicians, and the DPW team similarly has one recruiting Analyst and two Personnel Technicians. These specialized teams are designed to focus on the unique hiring needs of each department, ensuring faster recruitment and more targeted outreach for difficult-to-fill positions.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department update recruitment and hiring procedures. For example, requiring the updating of job postings on a regular basis in order to improve search engine visibility. (F3, F6, F7)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Recruitment procedures have been updated, including improvements to continuous recruitments with the addition of filing deadlines where applicable. The Employment Opportunities Center has also been enhanced with better integration for search engines and the introduction of a ChatBot to assist candidates.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department begin publishing per-position candidate pool policies and hiring results on a semi-annual basis. (F3, F6, F7)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Personnel Department currently provides hiring activity and turnover data upon request. Publishing detailed per-position candidate pool policies and hiring results is not necessary, as this information is already accessible to those who need it. This approach allows for more efficient use of resources while still providing transparency where it is most needed.

The implementation of Workday will further enhance the ability to generate and access hiring data on-demand, streamlining the process for both internal and external inquiries without the need for a formal semi-annual publication.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department, in collaboration with HSA, HSD and Public Works, embrace continuous improvement and publish a skills and advancement plan to accelerate promotion from within, including budget requirements and goals. (F8, F9)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Personnel Department, HSA, HSD and Public Works embrace continuous improvement. Supervisors meet with employees on an annual basis to review employee performance, career goals and objectives and training needs and assignments needed to achieve career goals. These annual evaluations are conducted on a 1:1 basis and are not made public. In addition, when departments create annual budgets, internal promotions are factored into the overall costs for the year. Lastly, departments can run promotional recruitments and utilize procedures for internal promotions at their discretion.

R5. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department publish a cost/benefit analysis comparing their current approach with that offered by integrated HR solutions. (F10, F11)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Personnel Department already utilizes integrated human resources (HR) solutions, such as JobAps, and is in the process of implementing Workday. The implementation of Workday, which includes payroll, benefits, and time tracking modules, is a significant modernization effort that has already been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The extensive planning, cost analysis, and approval process involved in this implementation has been documented in previous Board items, making an additional cost/benefit analysis unnecessary.

Workday is expected to streamline HR processes and improve overall efficiency, aligning with the County's goals of operational excellence.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department develop a plan detailing how they will solicit and evaluate employee recommendations that could help reduce the backlog of difficult to fill positions. (F6, F12)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Employees are already able to provide feedback at any time by contacting recruiters directly with their suggestions. Given this existing open line of communication, developing a separate formal plan is unnecessary. The current approach allows for real-time feedback and continuous improvement without requiring additional resources or procedural layers.

R7. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department publicly document how they have engaged external expertise which would likely improve hiring and promoting processes. (F6, F12)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

In 2019, the Personnel Department engaged with key stakeholders involved in the recruitment and hiring process to reduce the time required to establish eligibility lists for qualified candidates by 20%. This initiative was successfully completed and publicly documented as part of the 2019-2021 operational objectives. The Personnel Department continues to collaborate with external experts as needed to refine and enhance recruitment and promotion processes.

R8. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Personnel Department conduct a salary comparison study based on nearby counties. It is recommended that this study include counties which have routinely recruited Santa Cruz County employees and residents. (F6, F13, F14)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

Compensation studies are routinely conducted in preparation for contract negotiations and as needed upon department request. These studies already include comparisons with counties that are direct geographic competitors such as Santa Clara County and Monterey County. This approach ensures that our salary structures remain competitive and aligned with regional market conditions.

R9. The Grand Jury recommends that by December 31, 2024, the Personnel Department post a public dashboard, based on real time data, to include time-to-hire and vacancy rates for difficult to fill positions in County departments. (F15, F16, F17)

HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The Personnel Department already tracks time-to-hire data, from the request to establish a list, and vacancy rates, which change each pay period and are available in a report format. However, these metrics are primarily internal and are not directly relevant to applicants. For applicants, the most important information is the real-time status of their recruitment, which is available on the Employment Opportunities Center website. This platform provides updates on individual recruitment stages, and applicants can also email or call for additional information at any time.

The implementation of Workday will further enhance internal tracking capabilities.