

DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

AUDIT REPORT

HIRING IRREGULARITIES REVIEW

**PREPARED BY
FINANCE-INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

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Finance Department
Internal Audit

**Interim Chief Executive
Officer**

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Board of Commissioners

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District 2
Jeff Rader

District 3
Larry Johnson

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Sharon Barnes Sutton

District 5
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Kathie Gannon

District 7
Stan Watson

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 9, 2015
TO: John Matelski, Chief Information Officer/Director of Information Technology
FROM: Cornelia Louis, Deputy Director of Finance-Internal Audit (DIA)
SUBJECT: Hiring Irregularities

Attached is the report of the Hiring Irregularities review, which was conducted due to a hotline complaint.

As is customary with our audit work, we do not include the auditee's comments in our report. However, you may consider sending your comments or response directly to the Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from the County's Human Resource Department staff during the course of this review. If you have any questions about the audit or this report, please feel free to contact me at 404-371-2639.

Sincerely,

Cornelia Louis

CC: Board of Commissioners (BOC)
Zachary Williams, Chief Operating Officer/Executive Assistant
Gwen Brown-Patterson, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Finance Director
Benita Ransom, Director of Human Resources
Claudette Leak, Assistant to COO

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Hiring, training, and retaining of employees is the primarily responsibility of DeKalb County Human Resources (HR) Department. In order for a position to be filled, the hiring department must create a requisition in NEOGOV. Once completed, the hiring manager must route the requisition for approval through the appropriate channels: approval 1-department head, approval 2-budget analyst, 3-Chief Operating Officer, and approval 4-Human Resources Director. As of April 9, 2015, the approval channel processed changed, which only requires approval by the department head and the Human Resources Director. When the position has been approved through all channels in NEOGOV, the hiring department contacts the HR Generalist to post the position via job announcement and/or advertised for a minimum of three days. Applications are accepted before the close of the job announcement/advertisement. The Generalist creates a worksheet to review the qualifications of applicants. A register is prepared of qualified applicants and a referral list is submitted to the hiring department.

Qualified applicants are selected based on the Education vs. Experience Equivalence policy. The policy, implemented on May 1, 2012, states, "DeKalb County's practice prior to May 2012 had been to disqualify an individual for employment, promotion, or transfer when the minimum education requirement is not met. Experience was not substituted or recognized as equivalent to formal education for any position regardless of pay grade."

In addition, the policy outlines the following information:

Minimum Qualification—All successful candidates shall meet minimum qualifications as established in the position classification specification, which outlines education and experience requirements and provides that related experience can be substituted for requisite formal education for positions at pay grades 33 and below.

Equivalence – The substitution of experience for education is allowed when determining whether an applicant meets position qualifications. This provision provides for substitution of relevant work experience for education on a year-for-year basis. Only related professional-level experience will be credited for professional positions.

The hiring department schedules and conducts interviews and provides HR the recommended applicant(s) from the referral list. HR presents an offer to the applicant, schedules physicals, completes background checks, and performs E-Verify online with the 1-9 form.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Internal Audit received a hotline complaint regarding hiring irregularities within the Information Technology (IT) Department. The purpose of our review was to ensure IT complied with Human Resources' hiring policies and procedures.

Our review covered the period January 2013 through March 2015 of employees hired within the IT Department.

We reviewed employee and candidate files, position registers, emails, and policies and procedures.

Our review was conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and included such tests of records and other auditing procedures as were considered necessary under the circumstances.

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

Finding

The *IS Applications Manger* position minimum qualifications state the following: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Computer Information Systems, or other related field; five years of comprehensive experience in design and implementation of computer information systems, or a related field. Although the individual hired for the position did not possess a degree, the selected candidate had 17 years of Information Technology Experience. In this situation, experience was supplemented for educational requirements. There were seven (7) candidates on the referral list submitted by the HR Generalist. Out of the seven candidates, only two candidates possess IT and Six Sigma certifications. The individual hired has both IT and Six Sigma certifications.

The *Deputy Director IS* position minimum qualifications state the following: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Systems or other related fields; seven years of progressive experience in application testing methods, implementation and development. Experience with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software is required. Requires exceptional presentation skills and strong oral and written skills. Must have four years of managerial experience in a complex application environment. The individual hired was qualified and met the minimum requirement of a bachelor's degree along with seven (7) years of progressive experience. Furthermore, the individual hired has over 20 years of experience in Information Technology combined with various leadership positions and possess a certification as a Certified Government Chief Information Officer.

The *Program Analyst III* position minimum qualifications state the following: Bachelor's degree in Information Systems, Computer Science, Business, Telecommunications or a related field, with a concentration in computer technology; five years of experience in computer programming, program application or analysis, systems design and analysis, application system support or a related field. In addition, serves as a technical leader for Programmer Analyst I and II. Although the individual hired for the position did not possess a bachelor's degree, they had associate's degree along with 10 years of IT support experience. In this situation, experience was supplemented for educational requirements. Moreover, the individual hired had 22 years of supervisory/management/leadership experience and eight (8) years of project management skills.

The *IS Support Analyst* position minimum qualifications state the following: Associate's degree or two years of college level courses in Computer Science, MIS, or related field; three years' experience managing a computer security system or application, providing technical support assistance and troubleshooting problems in the security, operation, installation, and maintenance of a wide variety of computer hardware and software. IS Support Analyst job posting included the following, "An equivalent combination of education and/or experience will be considered." The individual hired possess a bachelor's degree and previous IT support experience.

There were 16 employees hired from January 2013 to March 2015 in the IT Department. Out of the 16 employees hired, four employees were previously employed by Gwinnett County Government; this accounts for 25% of employees hired during that time period. In addition, based on records review, one employee worked under the current Chief Information Officer at Gwinnett County for five years.

Since the implementation of Education vs Experience Equivalence policy, some position postings for grades 33 or below do not reflect the verbiage of the policy. The exclusion of the statement may

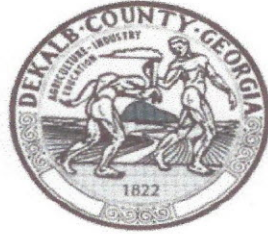
deter candidates who do not have a degree, but extensive experience in the required field.

Recommendation

Internal Audit recommends the Human Resources Department include the Education vs. Experience Equivalence information on all postings for grades 33 and below.

CONCLUSION

The IT Department complied with the requirements referred above applicable to the hiring process of the County. Based on the documents we obtained from HR, we found no evidence of nepotism or cronyism as it relates to the four (4) former Gwinnett County employees hired by IT Department. However, the four (4) employees represent 25% of the total employees hired between January 2013 and March 2015, which may indicate preferences exist.



DeKalb County Government
120 W. Trinity Place, Room 108 | Decatur, GA 30030 | 404.371.6210

TO: Gwen Brown-Patterson, Chief Financial Officer
FROM: John A. Matelski, Chief Information Officer/Director (Information Technology)
RE: Internal Audit Report - 2015 Compliance Audit - Information Technology
DATE: 14 July 2015

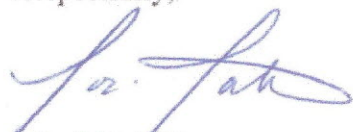
In response to the compliance audit, the Information Technology Department fully supports the recommendation to include the Education vs. Experience Equivalence information on all postings for grades 33 and below. The Information Technology Management leadership team has been aware of this equivalence requirement, and always works with our HR Generalist to ensure that we are hiring within DeKalb County HR Polies, Procedures and Guidelines.

As it relates to the conclusion which sites – “However, the four (4) employees represent 25% of the total employees hired between January 2013 and March 2015, which may indicate preferences exist.” – I do feel obligated to respond.

As the Director of the Technology function for DeKalb County government, it is my duty to build a world class technology organization that is focused on driving Innovation and Excellence, and creating a culture that will foster both. An integral part of this mandate is recruiting, selecting and retaining a workforce that has the capacity to do this. When I was hired in September of 2012, I came to DeKalb County as an agent of change, with the responsibility of rebuilding a technology agency that was struggling to support the evolving needs of the County. As I have been endeavoring to build a world class technology organization, it is my responsibility to the citizens and constituents that we serve, to recruit personnel who have the pre-requisite skills (education and experience) as well as the right attitude and personal drive to achieve excellence. The best way to recruit staff is to do so through personal knowledge and referrals, based on previous work experiences. If we are successful at recruiting, the competitive pool of qualified candidates is increased, thus making the selection process more meaningful and viable.

When a final hiring determination is recommended, if the education and experience of a known candidate are equal to or greater than the education and experience of an unknown candidate, I would argue that there should ALWAYS be a preference to the candidate that has a known track record. In my thirty (30) years of experience hiring personnel, I have found that just about anyone can make themselves look good “on paper”, but **if all things are equal** – personal knowledge of a candidates capabilities and work habits facilitates a much greater likelihood of successfully hiring and retaining the right person for the right job.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Matelski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Matelski

CC: Board of Commissioners (BOC)
Zachary Williams, Chief Operating Officer/Executive Assistant
Benita Ransom, Director of Human Resources
Claudette Leak, Assistant to the COO
Cornelia Louis, Deputy Director of Finance-Internal Audit (DIA)