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Employment Plan Addendum Accelerated Hiring Process

Exception to current Employment Plan Hiring Processes

Initial certification & request, re-certification and amendment, and request for expansion of positions

Procedural History:

Cook County Health (CCH) submitted a request to the Independent Inspector General (IIG) and the Employment Plan Officer (EPO) on August 1, 2023, pursuant to the provision in the Employment Plan (Plan) governing Plan amendments (XIV) certifying a need to hire nurses emergently and requesting an exception from the Plan that would provide for the ability to *permanently* hire nurses on an expedited basis. While the Plan contained (and still contains) an Emergency provision (VII.E) that provides for expedited hiring, that provision provides only for *temporary* hires given that no process is required. The request was to implement an alternative process for an initial period of 180 days as a pilot before permanently amending the plan, and an option to recertify for one 180-day extension if the emergency persisted after 180 days. The process detailed below (minus later amendments detailed in the footnote) was implemented in August 2023 for 180 days without objection from the IIG or EPO.

- Initial Certification & Request:

The following was shared in support of the initial certification and request:

CCH, along with healthcare organizations across the nation, are experiencing an unprecedented staffing shortage. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare staffing shortages lead all industries in vacancies. CCH has a 35% vacancy rate across our health system. To help address our urgent staffing needs, CCH is seeking to modify the Employment Plan to create a new emergency hiring process to permanently hire into critical positions. We intend to hire 150+ CN1 positions in a rapid timeframe and will explore additional clinical positions, once this group has been filled. The process triggered following the emergency declaration would last for 180 days. If the CEO certifies that the emergency persists after 180 days, then the emergency can be recertified for an additional 180 days.

- Re-certification:

On March 18, 2024, the Interim CEO re-certified the emergency. At the same time, he identified additional job titles requiring emergency hiring and proposed the process modifications detailed in the footnote. Neither the IIG nor the EPO raised objections, and the process will be implemented for an additional 180 days starting on March 25, 2024.

Positions Included in Process:

- August 2023

The certification identified numerous Clinical Nurse 1 vacancies. Clinical Nurse I hiring under the initial emergency declaration was completed between August 2023 and February 2024.

- March 2024

The re-certification identified additional positions for which emergency hiring is necessary. For the resulting extended pilot period, HR has generated a list of job titles (identified in the CEO's March 2024 certification of need), along with the requisition numbers that will be utilized and the PIDs that may be filled via the process. This list may be amended during extended pilot period consistent with a documented CEO update to the certification of need issued for the re-certification period.

All amendments will require HR to produce an update to Accelerated Hiring List, March 2024, with copies produced to the EPO.

Process:¹

To provide transparency regarding this process and the positions/vacancies for which it will be utilized, this memorialization of the Accelerated Hiring Process will be maintained with the Plan until the process is included in the Plan via formal amendment.

All fundamental Employment Plan principles such as the commitment to equal employment opportunity and the prohibition against hiring based upon Political Reasons and Factors, and the NPCC requirement apply.

- Posting of Notice of Job Opportunity. The Notice of Job Opportunity will adhere to an internal posting process in adherence to the C.B.A. Subsequent external postings will be a deviation from 14 days to 5 days posting. The same posting numbers will be utilized. *See* Section V.E.3.
- Preliminary Eligibility List. DHR generates the Preliminary Eligibility List (PEL), a list of Applicants who answered on their completed application that they meet all minimum qualifications, and then sorts the candidates in the order below in which they will be screened by DHR. This sorting will be documented on the sorted eligibility list (sorted PEL):

¹ Hiring under the Initial Request & Certification did not include a Contractor Preference or Student/Intern Preference. Similarly, the use of a Demobilized Contractor List and Deviations based upon prior Hiring Department historical documentation of concerns with a contractor were not in use. These were proposed and approved with the March 2024 recertification.

1. *Internal Union Applicant Preference* for those that an applicable CBA require be given priority – in the order required by the CBA [e.g., seniority],
2. *Military Veteran Preference* for those who attached the required documentation to prove veteran status which is first randomized prior to DHR screening the Applicants;
3. *Contractor Preference* for current agency staff working at CCH in the relevant job title to the requisition for greater than 8 weeks which is first randomized prior to DHR screening the Applicants;

HR must provide a list of eligible agency staff (with job titles and first day of contract) to the EPO prior to initial posting, with updates provided to the EPO whenever an additional contractor becomes eligible or ineligible for the preference,

4. *Student/Intern Preference* for students doing clinicals or externships on site within the preceding 12 months to the application date which is first randomized prior to DHR screening the Applicants;

Hiring Department must generate and provide a list of students, interns, and externs eligible for the preference, along with the dates required to evaluate eligibility for the preference, to HR and the EPO prior to initial posting. Updates must be produced to HR and the EPO whenever an additional student, intern or extern becomes eligible or ineligible for the preference.

5. *External Applicants* not eligible for a preference

If there are fewer PIDs than eligible external Applicants, HR randomizes the external Applicants and screens in that order.

- Validation. DHR screens and validates Applicants in the order they appear on the sorted PEL until the desired number of hires are identified. Specifically, DHR verifies that the Applicant is eligible: (1) meets the minimum qualifications listed on the applicable job descriptions, and (2) does not need to be disqualified due to factors such as recent discipline or appearing on the Ineligible for Hire List or Demobilized Contractor List². Individuals who are eligible are documented on the Offer List. The Hiring Department is required to share a current list of contingent workforce members and a current Demobilized Contractor List with DHR and EPO weekly.
- Interviews and Offers. DHR makes offers, without conducting interviews, in order of listing on the Offer List via the approved offer script. Where individuals decline or do not make it through the onboarding process, DHR returns to the sorted PEL and continues screening in order until all positions are filled, or no eligible candidates remain.

When an offer is to be made to a current contractor/agency staff member, the Candidate's information is sent to the Nursing Director of Staffing and Nursing Administration (Nursing Director) and the Hiring Manager (HM) to review the Applicant.

² The Demobilized Contractor List identifies all contracted staff that were asked not to return to CCH or whose contract was not extended for a reason related to performance, attendance, or cause.

- If the Nursing Director or the HM have concerns about the Applicant and do not wish to proceed with the offer, a Deviation Form, which shall describe and attach prior historical documentation of the department's concerns regarding the Applicant, will be completed and provided back to DHR.
- DHR will add the Deviation Form to the file and move to screening the next Candidate on the Sorted PEL.
- Accelerated Hiring List. The Accelerated Hiring Process requisition expires once the number of positions per title identified on the Accelerated Hiring List are filled. HR sends automated template letters through Taleo to the remaining Applicants advising them of the need to apply to future postings to be considered.
- Decision to Hire. DHR completes the Decision to Hire form (DTH) and includes standard language that the position was filled via the Accelerated Hiring Process. The DTH is maintained in a DTH folder generated in the hiring process for each selected candidate and in the employee's personnel file, if hired.