



County of Santa Barbara - Human Resources Department

One County. One Future.

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2020 CSAC Awards – Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County established an Employee Job Matching program, which temporarily reassigned County and local, mutual-aid employees to specialized positions.

CHALLENGE

On March 4, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state emergency to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The County of Santa Barbara's Office of Emergency Management activated the Emergency Operations Center, which prompted an increase in immediate staffing needs to fulfill the duties of the Public Health Department and emergency services related to COVID. As the state released new requirements and the County created additional COVID related positions, the urgent need for staffing reassignments grew exponentially week-by-week. Simultaneously, there were several County employees and mutual-aid partnership employees with decreased work hours due to the increased Countywide in-person business restrictions. The challenge was identifying employees in need of hours and appropriately matching their skillset to specialized positions resulting from the increased staffing demands of the pandemic.

SOLUTION

The County Human Resources Department developed the Employee Job Matching program to ensure the County of Santa Barbara maintains adequate staffing to meet the needs of County residents and businesses throughout COVID-19. The County of Santa Barbara had county and mutual-aid employees complete a survey that gathers information about their current job position as well as level of proficiency and experience in specific skillsets needed for re-assignment positions such as: Communication, Bilingual skills, IT skills, Microsoft Suite, Call Center, Finance/Accounting, etc. HR recruiters then review County and mutual-aid employees' responses and match them to available COVID-19 reassignment positions based of skills needed for those roles that employees possessed. This unique approach allowed employees to identify skills they possess that were not being traditionally used in their current role, but could be beneficial in a re-

assigned capacity, for example a Probation Officer being re-assigned to a Call Center Manager role.

The County of Santa Barbara outreached to mutual-aid partners, including neighboring cities, counties, and other special districts to encourage their employees, who had a reduction in hours, to submit an application for potential reassignment of duties with the County during the COVID response. This allowed employees who may have been laid off or furloughed to remain employed and support the efforts against COVID-19 throughout the communities in Santa Barbara County.

INNOVATION

In a rapidly changing environment that challenges the County to adhere to new requirements, health orders, and safety guidelines resulting in fluctuating staffing needs, we were able to adapt to our circumstances and repurpose our talent pool to accommodate our rising COVID staffing needs. By partnering with the Office of Emergency Services, Public Health Department, and mutual-aid entities, the County Human Resources Department was able to connect qualified employees, some who had reduced work hours/work limitations, with the urgent spike in COVID-related positions needed to support the community.

RESULTS

Through the Employee Job Matching program, County Human Resources was able to successfully reassign 300+ positions internally within the County and have 20 mutual-aid placements in a 4-month period. This does not account for the 800+ applications County HR received and processed for 14 recruitments run specifically for temporary (extra-help special) COVID-19 related positions. In summary, through the Employee Job Matching program the County Human Resources Department has been able to fulfill our COVID-19 staffing needs to meet the health order requirements and to support our local community residents and businesses. While this was created and used for the COVID-19 response, this will be used as a template for all emergencies moving forward.

REPLICABILITY

Other Counties can replicate our program because the survey is a tool/resource that we can easily share and Counties can modify to meet their specific staffing skillset needs. Staff from County Human Resources have already discussed and shared this process with another California County to help strategize how they could best meet the state's Contact Tracer staffing requirement. This skills based approach to reassignment of staff could allow Counties to quickly pivot and address temporary staffing needs that arise during the pandemic.