

Hiring 2.0

Getting the talent you need and keeping the talent you have

Hiring and keeping talented employees is requiring more creativity. It's especially true in times of budget cutbacks and reduced staffing. When our organizations are challenged to get the work done with fewer staff, we need to make sure we have talented people to do the job. There is no single answer to how to attract and retain local government employees. The varied approaches offered here, however, can be added to your tool kit to help your agency get the talent you need and keep the talent you have.

Cal-ICMA
California Consortium
A State Affiliate of ICMA

An Initiative of the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program

WHAT PEOPLE WANT IN A JOB

Being a great place to work is fundamental to successful recruitment. In the last decade, a great deal of research has been conducted about what people want in a job. This research says that employees, particularly young employees, are looking for jobs that have these characteristics:

- Challenging and interesting work
- Continuous learning
- Excellent management
- Alignment with personal values
- Flexible work environment
- Technologically savvy workplace
- Ability to use own initiative and judgment
- Diverse workforce
- Ability to be part of a team

TRADITIONAL HIRING PRACTICES DON'T MATCH TODAY'S NEEDS

Many of the traditional ways of hiring staff are not working as they did before. Best practices in recruitment and hiring now combine clear marketing with personalization of benefits and work schedules to address the specific needs of different demographics. By doing this, organizations can capture a greater cross-section of the available job market of skilled and qualified employees.

Organizations are changing their practices so that—

- Candidates easily understand the jobs being advertised, how to apply, the qualifications and skills needed, and the timeline for the process.
- Candidates get quick responses to their questions and applications.
- The process makes it easy for departments to participate in hiring the best person.
- Candidates feel they are sought after.

Cal-ICMA would like to thank Management Partners for its contributions in identifying best practices and developing this brochure.

Best Practices

in Local Government Hiring & Employee Retention

■ Many of the best practices provided below have at least one resource person listed who can be contacted for more information.

OUTREACH AND HIRING

Website Marketing: More candidates and hires are coming through website marketing than from newspaper ads. Where do talented jobseekers look? Facebook, Monster.com, jobs.icma.org, CALOPPS.org, and even YouTube are being used as marketing tools to attract a wider market.

Resources: Ted Cooper, Employment Division Chief, County of San Bernardino, tcooper@hr.sbcounty.gov; Robin Young, HR Programs Manager, City of Livermore, rayoung@ci.livermore.ca.us

TC Rethinking Position Descriptions: Communicate an exciting and positive message early on in the description, avoid jargon and exclusive language and fully explain all benefits (e.g., what exactly a 9/80 is) and how they relate to organizational values (e.g., work/life balance). Instead of promoting the duties of the position, consider promoting the meaning and results of the job in the organization and community.

Resources: Robin Young, HR Programs Manager, City of Livermore, rayoung@ci.livermore.ca.us; Rachael Hendricks, HR Analyst, City of San Luis Obispo, rhendric@slocity.org

TC Hiring for Talent: Redefine the concept of “most qualified.” HR departments typically translate the merit rule to hire the “most qualified” to rigidly mean the “most experienced” in local government and require extensive applications to document experience. The concept of “most qualified” must be expanded to include talent, “fit,” and leadership potential. If local government is to compete for young professionals and second careerists, these factors need to be taken into account if not outweigh mere experience.

Resources: Ted Cooper, Employment Division Chief, County of San Bernardino, tcooper@hr.sbcounty.gov; Gordon Youngs, Personnel Services Director, City of Brea, Gordony@ci.brea.ca.us

Branding: Use consistent messaging and standards in communications to describe what the organization does and why. Public service, if communicated clearly as contributing to the broader community, will resonate with younger candidates. Examples of hiring branding used by local governments/cities are: “Shaping Your World” (<http://www.shapeyourworld.com.au/>), “Making a Difference in your own Backyard” and “Building Community, Creating Opportunity.”

Resource: Bob Bell, HR Director, Redwood City, bbell@redwoodcity.org

TC Performance Metrics: Measure, analyze and improve processes to increase the ratio of leads to invites, invites to interviews, interviews to offers, and offers to hires.

Resource: Donna Vaillancourt, HR Director, San Mateo County, dvaillancourt@co.sanmateo.ca.us

TC Mapping Your Hiring Process: To find ways to streamline your hiring process, create a map of the process—from initial request to fill a vacancy to the start date of the new employee filling that job. Identify all of the steps, how long it actually takes at each step, look for bottlenecks, and find ways to cut out steps and time.

Resource: Suzanne Mason, HR Director, City of Long Beach, Suzanne_Mason@longbeach.gov

TC Hiring Plan: Create a plan for each step in the process of filling a vacancy—from recruitment and outreach, to candidate assessment, to keeping in touch with candidates, to background checks, final offer, and first day on the job. Use the hiring plan as a way to move the process along quickly and keep the candidates in the forefront.

Resource: Bob Bell, HR Director, Redwood City, bbell@redwoodcity.org

TC Position Specific Hiring: Recruit for each vacancy, as soon as the decision is made to fill the position, rather than waiting to recruit for an entire classification.

Resource: Mark Danaj, HR Director, City of San Jose, Mark.Danaj@sanjoseca.gov

TC Quick Turnaround: Gen X’ers and Millennials expect to apply for a job and be moved through the process quickly. Web-based technology can streamline your practices to cut recruitment time by 50–70%.

Resources: Rebecca Burnside, HR Director, Foster City, rburnside@fostercity.org; www.neogov.com; www.calopps.org

TC Open Until Filled: Accept applications for vacancies without a deadline, and when sufficient applications are received (based on the quality of candidates), proceed with candidate screening and assessment.

Resources: Mark Danaj, HR Director, City of San Jose, Mark.Danaj@sanjoseca.gov; Kathy Hamilton, HR Specialist, City of San Luis Obispo khamilto@slocity.org

Employee Referral Program: Pay a bonus to existing staff for referring a candidate who is ultimately hired into a designated “hard to fill” position.

Resources: Donald W. Turko, Director of Human Resources, County of Solano, DWTurko@SolanoCounty.com; Kathy Farrar, HR Director, City of Mountain View, kathy.farrar@mountainview.gov

Electronic Signatures for Position Requisition Sign-Off: Speed the approval process by allowing required signatures to be done electronically. Also, consider electronic distribution of eligibility list and applications.

Resource: Robin Young, HR Programs Manager, City of Livermore, rayoung@ci.livermore.ca.us

Emailed Job Openings: Allow job seekers to receive email alerts when openings arise in areas they have specified.

Resources: Donald W. Turko, Director of Human Resources, County of Solano, DWTurko@SolanoCounty.com; Ted Cooper, Employment Division Chief, County of San Bernardino, tcooper@hr.sbcounty.gov

Ongoing Skills-Based Tests: Regularly and repeatedly hold skills-based tests (Word, typing, proofreading, numeric data entry), so people are then ready when a specific job becomes available.

Resource: Doug Stevenson, Sr. Personnel Analyst, City of Brea, dougs@ci.brea.ca.us

TC Flexible Job Classifications: Create job classifications that enable you to hire people early in their careers, help them grow and develop, and then promote them to higher levels as they increase their skills and capacity.

Resources: Kathy Farrar, HR Director, City of Mountain View, kathy.farrar@mountainview.gov; Rachael Hendricks, HR Analyst, City of San Luis Obispo, rhendric@slocity.org

TC Career Pathways: Provide examples of career pathways in local government on your HR website. Younger individuals, specifically, are interested in making decisions with an end goal in mind.



■ Many of these best practices can be implemented inexpensively.
1¢ Indicates low or no cost for the best practice.



RE-RECRUITING YOUR EMPLOYEES

1¢ Cal-ICMA Coaching Program: Encourage your staff to get involved in the Coaching Program. Make opportunities available to them to participate in mentoring, webcasting and other programs offered through Cal-ICMA.

Resource: www.cal-icma/coaching

1¢ Strategic Workforce Planning: Plan ahead by forecasting talent needs based on turnover trends and expected vacancies. Analyze changes in tenure, age at resignation and retirement, and other trends.

Resource: Suzanne Mason, HR Director, City of Long Beach, Suzanne_Mason@longbeach.gov

Color-code your organization charts to show staff ages to illustrate expected workforce turnover and opportunities for promotion for younger staff.

Resource: Russ Carlsen, HR Director, City of Palo Alto, Russ.Carlsen@cityofpaloalto.org

1¢ Talent Readiness Assessment: Utilize assessment tools for employees who are interested in moving up in the organization to help determine their readiness for leadership positions.

Resource: Russ Carlsen, HR Director, City of Palo Alto, Russ.Carlsen@cityofpaloalto.org

1¢ Re-conceptualize the Role of Senior Managers: Modify expectations of your senior managers to include, as an essential responsibility, the professional development of their staff to help them grow in their jobs and be prepared for higher positions. Evaluate and reward your senior managers for their success in growing their staff.

Resource: Gordon Youngs, Personnel Services Director, City of Brea, Gordony@ci.brea.ca.us

Internships: Create structured jobs for college students or recent graduates. Create a focus on keeping talented people once they complete their internships.

Resources: Donald W. Turko, Director of Human Resources, County of Solano, DWTurko@SolanoCounty.com; Ted Cooper, Employment Division Chief, County of San Bernardino, tcooper@hr.sbcounty.gov

1¢ “Stay” Interviews: Interview your staff, just as you would with potential new employees, to ask about their goals and aspirations. Determine how the organization can help them stay interested and motivated to prevent them from moving on to other organizations.

1¢ Employee Meetings: Have your senior managers meet with employees—to keep them connected, engaged and motivated. Employees want to know what is going on and to feel that they are part of something larger than their individual job. This is a good way to connect, ask questions about their satisfaction and find new ways to challenge and involve them.

Resources: Holly Brock-Cohn, HR Director, City of Livermore, Hbrockcohn@ci.livermore.ca.us; Gordon Youngs, Personnel Services Director, City of Brea, Gordony@ci.brea.ca.us

One-Year Management Assistant or Fellowship Program: Hire recent Master’s Degree graduates from a public administration, public policy or urban studies program. Place them into a rotation-based program in the organization, give them challenging and inspiring work, provide mentors, and assist them in finding permanent jobs at the end of the program. If you are not able to hire someone full-time, consider sharing the position and expense with a neighboring city.

Resource: Suzanne Mason, HR Director, City of Long Beach, Suzanne_Mason@longbeach.gov

1¢ Action Learning Teams: Engage emerging leaders in your organization in cross-departmental teams to address important problems. This enables emerging leaders to learn new skills and discover hidden talents.

Resource: Russ Carlsen, HR Director, City of Palo Alto, Russ.Carlsen@cityofpaloalto.org

1¢ Management Talent Exchange: Partner with another local government to exchange professionals for a three-month period to expose staff to new ways of doing things.

Resource: <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/hrd/training.asp>

AA, BA, MPA Degrees On Site: Provide classroom space for employees to pursue degrees. Partner with universities to provide scholarships for tuition and arrange course credit for programs offered through the local government’s supervisory and management training program.

Resources: Kathy Farrar, HR Director, City of Mountain View/Silicon Valley Regional Training Consortium, kathy.farrar@mountainview.gov; Allison Picard, Human Resources Director, Kings County, allison.picard@co.kings.ca.us (contact for MPA programs only)

1¢ Early Career Experiences: Enable younger staff to attend conferences and regional events, make presentations to the governing body, job shadow, take on larger projects and have other experiential learning opportunities. These “stretch” assignments provide a sense that they are making contributions early in their careers.

Resources: Donna Pontau, Legacy Livermore Program Manager, City of Livermore, dzpontau@ci.livermore.ca.us; Gordon Youngs, Personnel Services Director, City of Brea, Gordony@ci.brea.ca.us

1¢ Mentoring: Pair an employee with a senior manager as a mentor to provide career advice.

Resource: Ken Pulskamp, City Manager, City of Santa Clarita, kpulskamp@santa-clarita.com

Developing Employee Learning Programs: Programs range from leadership development to first line supervisory training to technical training for employees. Consider aligning trainings to organizational values.

Resource: Bob Bell, HR Director, Redwood City, bbell@redwoodcity.org

- **Assessment:** Programs and participation are based on an assessment of learning needs. All employees are encouraged by their supervisors to participate in learning opportunities. Develop a specific hourly goal for annual training for each employee.

Resource: Bob Bell, HR Director, Redwood City, bbell@redwoodcity.org **1¢**

- **Leadership Development:** Identify competencies and skills needed for success in the organization and develop a comprehensive program involving group and individual learning, mentoring, coaching and career planning.

Resource: Donna Vaillancourt, HR Director, San Mateo County, dvaillancourt@co.sanmateo.ca.us

- **Supervisor and Management Development:** Using interactive and experiential designs, participants learn first-hand how conduct can either cause or prevent workplace problems and liabilities. For example, participants can try out new roles through role playing, serve as witnesses and jurors in simulated cases, and design and implement a project for the organization.

Resource: Bob Bell, HR Director, Redwood City, bbell@redwoodcity.org

- **Credentials for Participating:** Create a certificate for participating in a series of related training programs (e.g. Supervisory Skills, Ethics).

Resource: Donna Vaillancourt, HR Director, San Mateo County, dvaillancourt@co.sanmateo.ca.us **1¢**

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OTHER IDEAS

Use Technology: PDAs, wikis, wireless connections and on-line access to all sorts of information are the norm in daily life. Today's employees—particularly younger ones—expect to have fast, reliable, and constantly improving technology as part of the workplace.

Transferring Institutional Knowledge: Create ways to document and impart knowledge of retiring employees to others. This can include creating an internal city wiki.

Resource: Palopedia, Jon Abendschein, Resource Planner, City of Palo Alto, jon.abendschein@cityofpaloalto.org

Vacation Leave: Provide more time off for new employees while reducing the time limits to accrue vacation hours.

Cafeteria Plans: Allow employees to tailor their benefits to their needs. Some employees need benefits to enable them to care for elderly family members (flexibility to care for aging parents, referral services, etc.), while others have small children and need nearby childcare and scheduling flexibility to attend to family responsibilities.

1¢ **Life/Work Balance:** Provide a variety of flex scheduling options (e.g., 9/80, 4/10), depending on the needs of employees and their work groups. Allow telework opportunities and provide appropriate technical support. Offer resources (such as info-referral) and encourage self-help support groups to employees regarding child care, elder care, grief support, and other family support needs.

Resource: Kathy Farrar, HR Director, City of Mountain View, kathy.farrar@mountainview.gov

Employee Self-Service: Create self-service applications so employees can log in their own benefits modifications, tax withholding, beneficiaries and other personal changes.

Resource: Heather Shupe, Sr. Administrator for HR, City of Palo Alto, Heather.Shupe@CityofPaloAlto.org

1¢ **Employee Orientation or “Onboarding”:** Use the orientation to immediately impress. This is the first opportunity to impress upon the new employee what the culture is of the organization. Orientations should not be rushed and should include the organizational values, challenges and opportunities along with pathways for involvement.

Resource: Donald W. Turko, Director of Human Resources, County of Solano, DWTurko@SolanoCounty.com

Preventative Healthcare Programs: Individuals respond positively to organizations that embrace the total health and well-being of employees. Preventative care programs not only reduce cost, but also result in more healthy and productive employees.

Resources: Peter Bassett, Benefits Manager, San Mateo County, pbassett@co.sanmateo.ca.us; Bill Henderson, Risk Manager, City of Livermore, bahenderson@ci.livermore.ca.us

1¢ **Systematize Innovation:** Consider ways to intentionally incorporate initiative and innovation in the workplace. Allow a certain amount of time per week that employees can use to develop new programs and services even outside of their department.

Resource: Holly Brock-Cohn, HR Director, City of Livermore, Hbrockcohn@ci.livermore.ca.us

Values-Based Ethics Programs: Members of emerging generations, especially, are more accustomed to the positive consequences of doing the right thing, rather than the negative consequences of doing the wrong thing. Consider the implementation of an ethics program that emphasizes the ideal values for an employee at your organization.

Resource: Carol McCarthy, Deputy City Manager, City of Santa Clara, cmccarthy@santaclaraca.gov

Environmental Responsibility: Show a commitment to the environment and sustainability by creating programs to address these issues. Examples include an interdepartmental Sustainability Team and incentives for using alternative transportation.

Resource: Steve Emslie, Interim Deputy City Manager, City of Palo Alto, steve.emslie@cityofpaloalto.org; Kathy Hamilton, HR Specialist, City of San Luis Obispo, khamilto@slacity.org



Further Reading

- <http://www.hotjobsresources.com/pdfs/MillennialWorkers.pdf>
- *Generation Y: Thriving (and Surviving) With Generation Y at Work* by Peter Sheahan, Hardie Grant Books, 2006
- *Millennials Rising: The Next Greatest Generation* by Neil Howe and William Strauss, Vintage, 2000
- *Talent on Demand: Managing Talent in an Age of Uncertainty* by Peter Cappelli, Harvard Business School Press, 2008

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For more information...

Contact any of the local government resource people listed in this brochure, and check out the Cal-ICMA website at www.cal-icma.org.

For more information about any of these best practices, please contact Jan Perkins, Partner, at jperkins@managementpartners.com, 939.202.8870 or visit www.managementpartners.com.



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