

Date: January 8, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Joe Ambrosini, Director of Human Resources 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Updates on Human Resources Hiring Process Improvements**

The recruitment landscape within local government has been a widespread challenge, and the City of Long Beach (City) has not been immune to these hurdles. With a 22 percent vacancy rate, our City has felt the impact firsthand. The City operates under a dual hiring system of both Classified and Unclassified (UC) personnel. Classified personnel are recruited and hired under the Civil Service Department and subject to Civil Service Rules and Regulations, whereas UC personnel are hired through the City's Human Resources and/or department process. Historically, the City's time to hire timeline has been substantially lengthy for both the Classified and UC processes. In 2021 and 2022, the UC process had an average time to hire of over seven months. However, recognizing these challenges has spurred proactive measures aimed at implementing a more effective and efficient UC hiring system.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 22) adopted budget, effective October 1, 2022, the City Council approved the addition of a dedicated Talent Acquisition (TA) Division within the Human Resources (HR) Department, aimed at streamlining recruitment processes and improving talent sourcing for the UC service. TA brings value to the City in many ways, such as providing better customer service to the City's departments, employees, and applicants to create a greater sense of commitment to meaningful and sustainable change in the time it takes to hire and onboard candidates. Additionally, the division increases the opportunity for City departments to obtain and retain the talent and resources required to provide the community with needed services. And lastly, it ensures regular and consistent assessment of analytics and processes to promote timely improvement to continue to push the City forward.

In December 2022, the division was officially established within HR and focus was placed on filling key vacancies on the team and building/developing the foundational processes for implementation. May 1, 2023, marked the beginning of a phased approach in centralizing the City's hiring processes. Each month, three to four City Departments were phased in under the new TA processes up until final implementation on October 1, 2023. Since May 2023, there has been notable improvement in the following areas: UC hiring process structure, recruitment, retention, job marketing and outreach, local hiring, and diversity.

Improvements

UC Hiring Process Structure

The new TA led model has taken the place of the heavily decentralized structure where each operating department was conducting nearly all steps in the recruitment process. HR now

takes a more proactive approach and has been able to develop and administer a centralized structure and create a standardized timeline that allows for gathering of accurate and consistent data to measure efficiencies moving forward and guarantee that the process is equitable across the organization.

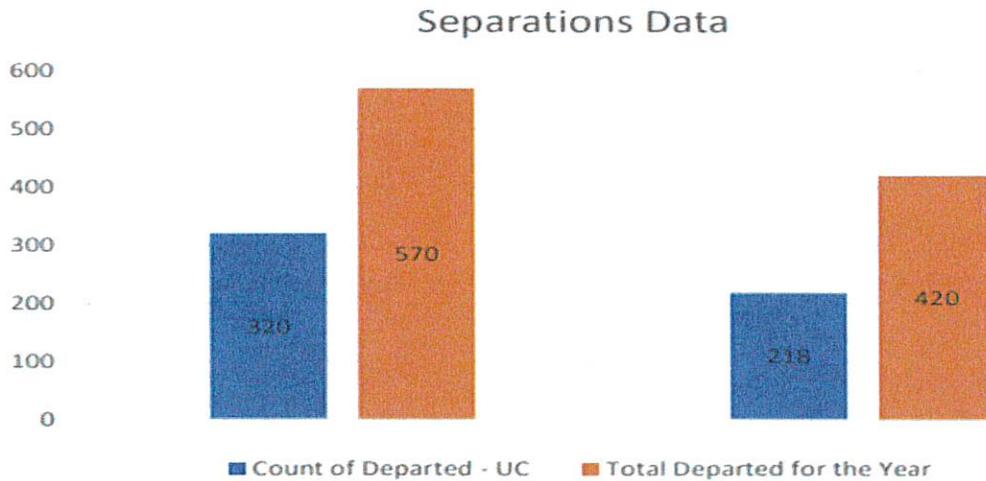
Some of the recently centralized functions of the TA process include:

- Implementation of a strategic approach to recruiting consisting of collaboration and partnership with Departments to develop staffing plans that will address hard to fill positions prior to posting the job.
- Advertisement and outreach to further address ongoing citywide diversity and equity efforts.
- Standardization of UC hiring processes such as job bulletins, minimum qualification screening, and referral of eligible candidates.
- Local recruitment within the Long Beach community through job fairs and other outreach events and efforts.
- Maintenance of the NEOGOV applicant tracking system to ensure regular review of performance analytics.
- Enhancement of the partnerships between Departments and HR to engage qualified diverse candidates and fill UC vacancies within reasonable timeframes.

Recruitment and Retention

Through consistency and strategic initiatives, HR has significantly streamlined recruitment processes, making a remarkable leap in efficiency compared to the historical process. Notably, concerted efforts have yielded positive results, reducing the average recruitment timeframe for at-will/UC positions citywide. The team's focus on optimization and implementation of refined strategies has led to a staggering improvement, reducing the average recruitment duration from a daunting seven months down to an efficient seventy (70) days. This achievement not only surpasses the initial goal of 90 days but also signifies a remarkable milestone, saving a substantial twenty (20) days per recruitment cycle. This is also less than the average recruitment timeline for municipal agencies based on recent survey data. This expedited process ensures quicker onboarding of qualified professionals, reinforcing the City's capacity to promptly meet staffing needs and boost its operational effectiveness.

Efforts towards optimization within the recruitment landscape continue to evolve beyond just expediting processes. The focus extends to bolstering retention rates and ensuring sustained enhancements across the board. Between 2022 and 2023 we have seen a decrease in employee separation (i.e. staff turnover) numbers. Based on the data in the chart below, there has been an overall decrease of 26 percent for all employment with the City and approximately 32 percent for just the UC Service.

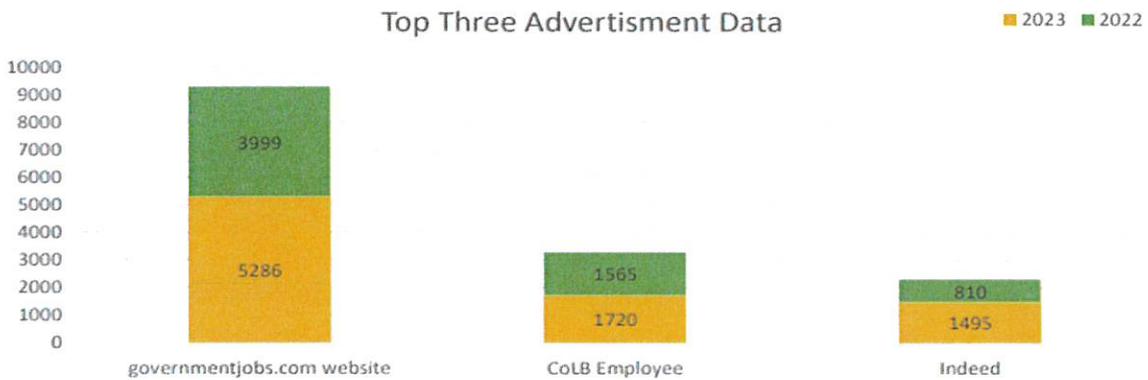
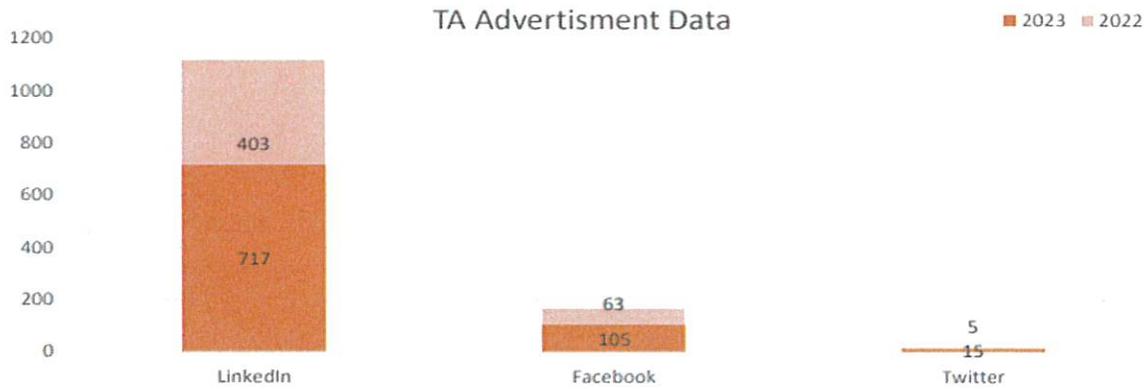


In further effort toward this goal, an Onboarding Policy and Survey have been meticulously crafted, peer-reviewed, and are on the cusp of implementation. This strategic move aims to provide a consistent and comprehensive onboarding experience for all newly hired or re-hired employees within the City. The forthcoming policy emphasizes a streamlined onboarding and orientation process, facilitating a clearer understanding of timelines, expectations, training avenues, and advancement opportunities available within the City framework. Furthermore, it illuminates the diverse benefits accessible to City employees. Simultaneously, the associated survey seeks to solicit input and gauge the satisfaction levels of new hires regarding the onboarding and recruitment processes. By capturing feedback, these results will become instrumental in evaluating the overall employee experience and identifying opportunities for refining and enhancing the City's hiring programs, policies, and procedures. Early in the new year, these pivotal tools will be employed, marking another significant stride towards improving Long Beach's workforce and cultivating an environment conducive to sustained growth and success.

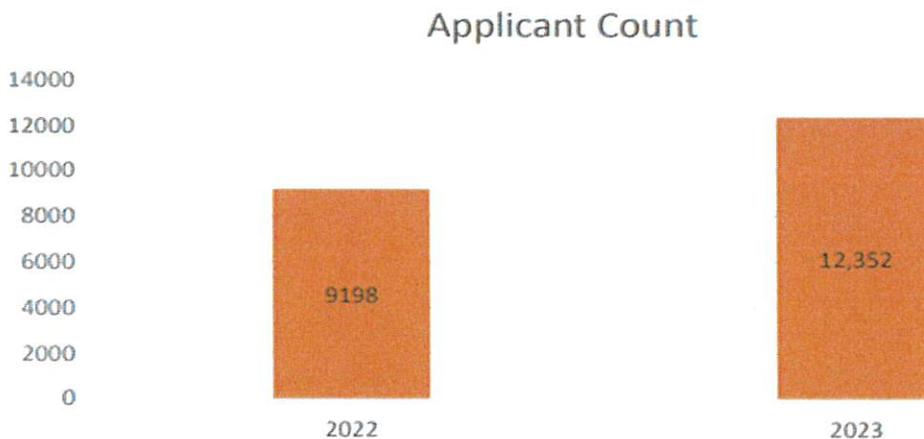
Job Marketing and Outreach

Centralizing these functions has allowed HR a greater opportunity to devote significant time and attention to enhancing job outreach efforts. In addition to email marketing and job fair participation, the TA team has focused on the development of HR's social media presence, brand, and consistent job marketing for UC employment opportunities. Strong emphasis has been placed on increasing the visibility of UC jobs on platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Indeed, and Handshake, amongst others, with an even stronger focus on not only increasing applicants, but placing an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion to attract a diverse workforce.

The City has increased job visibility on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, and Indeed has become one of the top three advertisement platforms for the UC service. The charts below reflect applicant responses to the question, "How did you first hear of this job opportunity?" The first chart below shows each social media platform, and the second highlights the top three advertisement platforms.

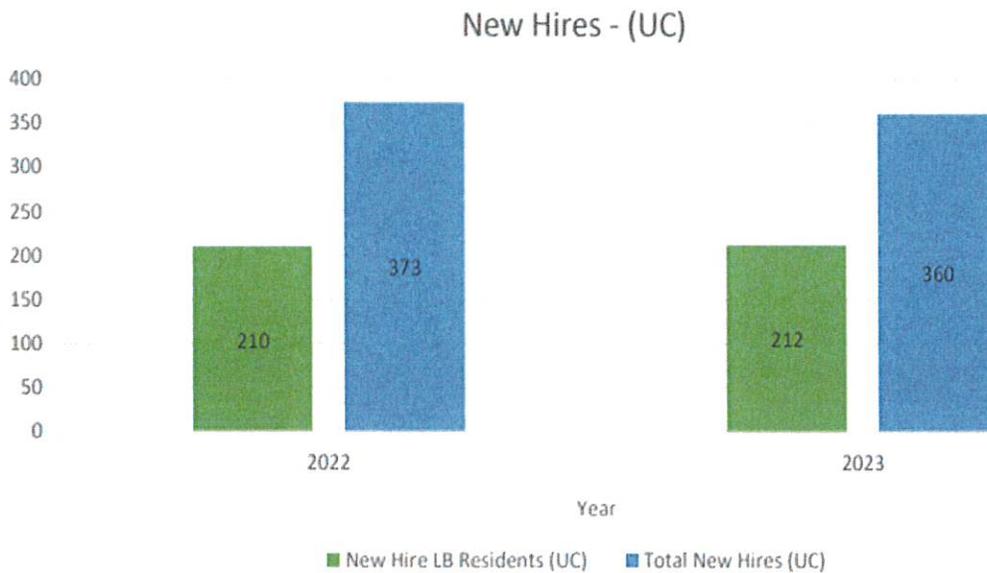


Furthermore, there has been an increase in applicants as seen in the chart below. In 2022, a total of 9,198 people applied to UC employment opportunities, and following implementation of the TA division, we had a total of 12,352 people apply for these same opportunities. That is a 34 percent increase in total applicants for the UC service—evidence that new job marketing and outreach strategies are increasing the reach of the City’s UC job opportunities.

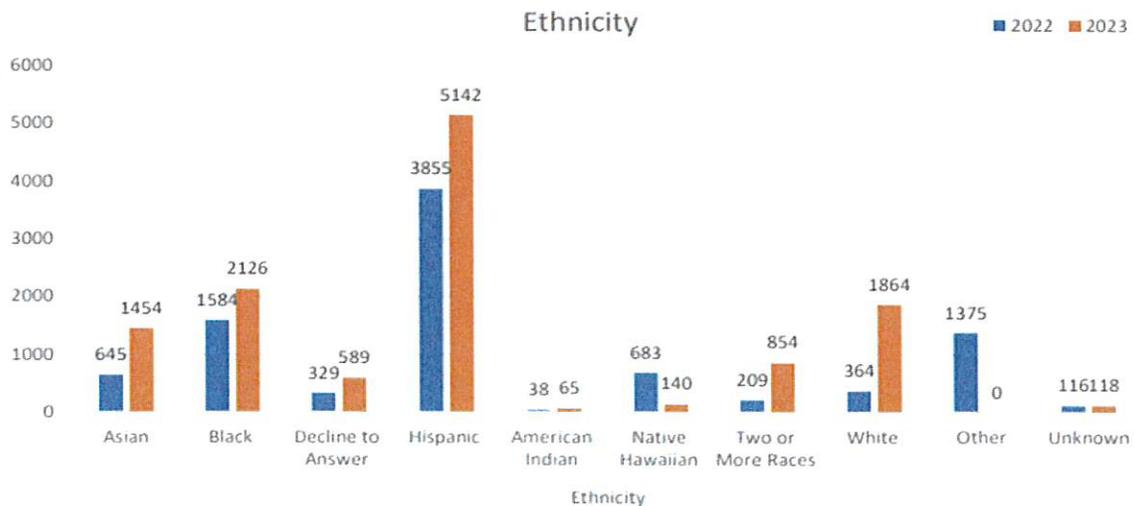


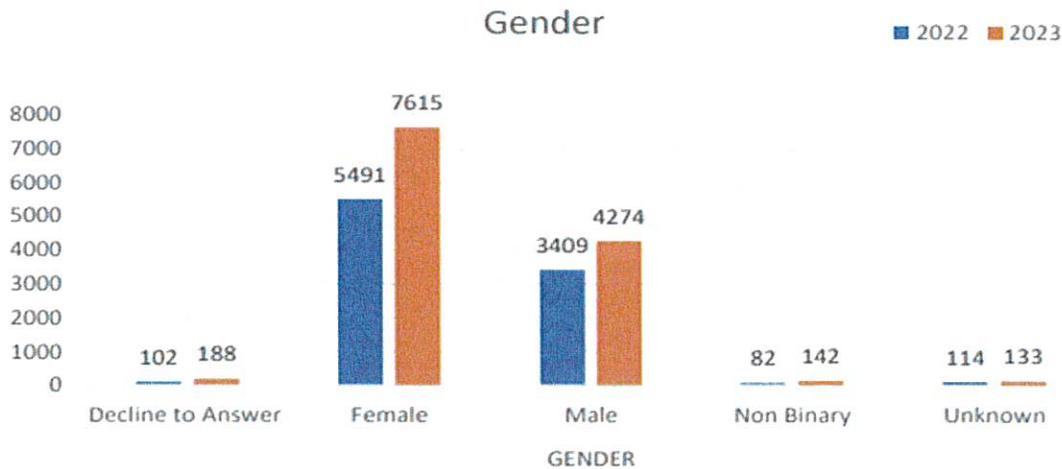
Local Hiring and Diversity

Under the new division, a strong emphasis is placed on fostering a diversified workforce to reflect and align with the City's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The City has worked diligently to increase economic inclusion and employment opportunities for residents and has been able to increase the number of local new hires by 1.5 percent, according to data shown below.



Additionally, under new targeted outreach efforts, there has been noteworthy increases in Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, two or more race, Female, and Non-binary applicants, as shown in the charts below.





Next Steps

In Long Beach's ongoing pursuit of a robust and diverse workforce, the strides made in talent acquisition and retention underscore a commitment to innovation and inclusivity. From streamlining recruitment processes to implementing comprehensive onboarding policies, the City remains steadfast in its dedication to fostering an environment that attracts top talent and nurtures a culture of growth and excellence. As the journey continues, these efforts stand as a testament to Long Beach's unwavering commitment to serving its community and building a thriving, inclusive future for all. Although the new TA division has only been recently implemented, we have seen several major improvements, and we anticipate that after fully implementing other changes in the new year (e.g., Onboarding Survey and Policy, Applicant Appeal Process, and a comprehensive Hiring Guide), things will only get better.

If you have any questions, please contact Fred Verdugo at 562-570-5045.

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