RECRUITMENT GENERAL INFORMATION GUIDE

Prince George's County
Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)

April 3, 2024 Version 1

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

List of Tables

Introduction - Recruitment General Information Guide

Purpose

The Recruitment General Information Guide provides general information on the competitive recruitment and selection process for Prince George's County Government (County) classified and temporary positions.

This guide is intended to provide guidance to County Human Resource Liaisons (HRL), Hiring Managers, and Directors on the recruitment and hiring process from start to finish. In this guide, you will find:

- Process overviews
- How-to guidance
- Reference materials
- Key-points-of-contact on all aspects of the process

This guide outlines the process the County follows for hiring, screening, and interviewing/selection to ensure a fair, equitable, and ethical process.

This guide will be updated as processes change over time and available to all County employees to ensure that all stakeholders share a uniform understanding of the recruiting and hiring process. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Office of Talent Management and Acquisition at OHRMRecruitment@co.pg.md.us.

Administrative Procedures and Collective Bargaining Agreements

Here are Administrative Procedures and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) that aid in guidance for recruiting and hiring in the County:

1. AP 122: Position Review Board
2. AP 208: Methods of Filling Positions
3. AP 209: Limited Grant Funded Positions
4. AP 204: Temporary Positions
5. AP 241: Dually Allocated Positions
6. AP 245: Position Description Development
7. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) CBA
8. Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) Civilians CBA
9. International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Civilians CBA
10. Police Civilian Employees Association (PCEA) CBA
11. Prince George's Correctional Officer Association – Civilian CBA

Systems and Technology

Presently, the County utilizes two (2) systems, SAP and NEOGOV, for the recruiting and hiring process.

SAP

- Employee Profile Management: SAP serves as the County's Human Resources Information System (HRIS) where employee information is maintained. Information includes, but is not limited to, employee's name, home and mailing address, telephone numbers, emergency contacts, hire date, position occupied, and salary history.
- Position Management: This includes position creation, reallocation, backfilling, and approving positions via the SAP electronic Position Review Board (ePRB). This process involves the review and approval of positions by both the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM). OMB reviews positions to ensure that they are approved in the fiscal year budget and that funding has been allocated for the requested position. OHRM ensures the position description matches the classification specifications and the position type and other attributes are entered correctly, as well as that the required documentation has been submitted.

NEOGOV

- Insight – The applicant tracking system used by OHRM to post job announcements, receive candidate applications, track candidate statuses as they move throughout the recruiting process, and refer and complete hire authorizations for selected candidates.
- Online Hiring Center (OHC) – The platform HRLs, Hiring Managers, Raters, and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) used to view and access the requisitions and referred candidates on their prospective Agency requisitions. Talent Acquisition Analysts also approve entered requisitions through OHC prior to posting job announcements.
- Training – The County's Learning Management System (LMS) promotes employee training with an easy-to-use system for HR, department managers, and employees. Training eliminates the administrative burden of managing multiple employee training programs by providing a centralized online HR LMS platform designed for the specific needs of the County.
- Onboard – The online system that new hires can use to obtain additional information regarding County government, policies, and procedures, complete their employment documentation, such as tax forms, beneficiary forms, and Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9.
- Performance – The online system tool that creates and automates the performance management and evaluation process. It offers a clear, intuitive tracking component to help analyze Agency employee populations. With Performance, you can create an effective, comprehensive performance evaluation process that helps to inform employees of their performance and strengths, and aids in leading to a more productive, engaged workforce.

Key Stakeholders

The recruitment and hiring process has several key stakeholders, each of whom has a different responsibility throughout the process. Table 1 defines the specific roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders.

Table 1 – Key Stakeholders in the Recruitment and Hiring Process

Key Stakeholder Role and Responsibility	
	Hiring Manager The Hiring Manager is responsible for identifying the hiring need, developing the documentation for the recruitment package, interviewing, selecting a candidate from the list of referred candidates, and developing a training plan for the new hire.
	Human Resources Liaison (HRL) The HRL's role varies by Agency. The HRL performs a variety of human resource management and administrative duties. The HRL may assist with collecting and developing recruitment packages, creating ePRB requests, creating and managing requisitions in NEOGOV, candidate screening and candidate dispositioning, and initiating candidate selection and hire actions in OHC.
	Talent Acquisition Analyst (TA Analyst) Each Agency has an assigned TA Analyst who is responsible for strategizing and consulting with Agency HRLs, creating recruitment announcements, screening candidates' qualifications, and ensuring that the County maintains a fair and equitable recruitment process.
	Classification and Compensation Analyst (Class and Comp Analyst) The Class and Comp Analyst reviews ePRB requests, maintains the County's classification structure, updates classification specifications, conducts position audits and organizational structures, and reviews position descriptions. In addition, the Class and Comp Analyst is responsible for reviewing the salary structure for the County, making recommendations for salary adjustment, including salary rates upon appointment, promotions, and demotions, and conducts compensation studies.

Job Applicants' Rights

Americans with Disabilities Act Reasonable Accommodations

Applicants who need assistance completing or submitting a County employment application via NEOGOV's applicant tracking system may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Applicants may request a reasonable accommodation to participate in a proficiency examination or interview. A person with a disability or his/her representative must make a request for an auxiliary aid or reasonable modification directly to the Appointing Authority of the affected Agency or by contacting OHRMRecruitment@co.pg.md.us.

For additional guidance, contact the Agency HRL and refer to Administrative Procedure 142 – American Disability Act.

Nondiscrimination

The County is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity and promotes inclusivity in the workplace. All decisions regarding recruiting, hiring, promoting, work assignments, training, professional development, health benefits, and other conditions of employment are made without unlawful discrimination based on age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, political or union affiliation, marital status, physical or mental handicap, or other factors not based on merit.

Language Access

The Language Access Program (LAP) requires the County to provide equal access and participation in public areas, programs, and activities for residents who cannot or have limited capacity to speak, read, or write the English language. For additional information, contact your Agency LAP Coordinator.

Access to Information

Any job applicant has the right to inspect their personal examination documents and materials. When a competitive examination involves a rating derived from the judgement of subject matter experts (SME), the individual rating shall not be available for inspection by the job applicant; however, a composite rating for each part of the examination, which is judged by SMEs, shall be made available.

All examination documents and materials are deemed to be confidential information and not available for public information or inspection.

Communication

Job applicants receive an automated email message or text message from Governmentjobs.com immediately upon submitting applications.

TA Analyst Communication

As the TA Analyst dispositions the applicant in NEOGOV Insight, the candidate will receive an eligibility notice. The TA Analyst will send a notice:

- To inform a candidate of eligibility - meets or does not meet qualifications
- In some cases, to complete post application pre-eligibility assessments

HRL or Hiring Manager Communication

As the HRL or Hiring Manager dispositions the candidate through the NEOGOV OHC Hire Workflow, the HRL will send notice to candidates to:

- Schedule an interview or complete an assessment
- Make conditional offer
- Conduct pre-employment and background checks
- Send final offer
- Send notification of non-selection for position

Recordkeeping

NEOGOV is the County's applicant tracking system (ATS) where most documentation is maintained. Information includes:

- Recruitment announcements
- Requisitions
- Applicants' employment applications
- Applicants' supporting documentation attached to the employment applications
- Notices sent to applicants (i.e., eligibility, rejection, conditional and final offers)
- Salary analysis

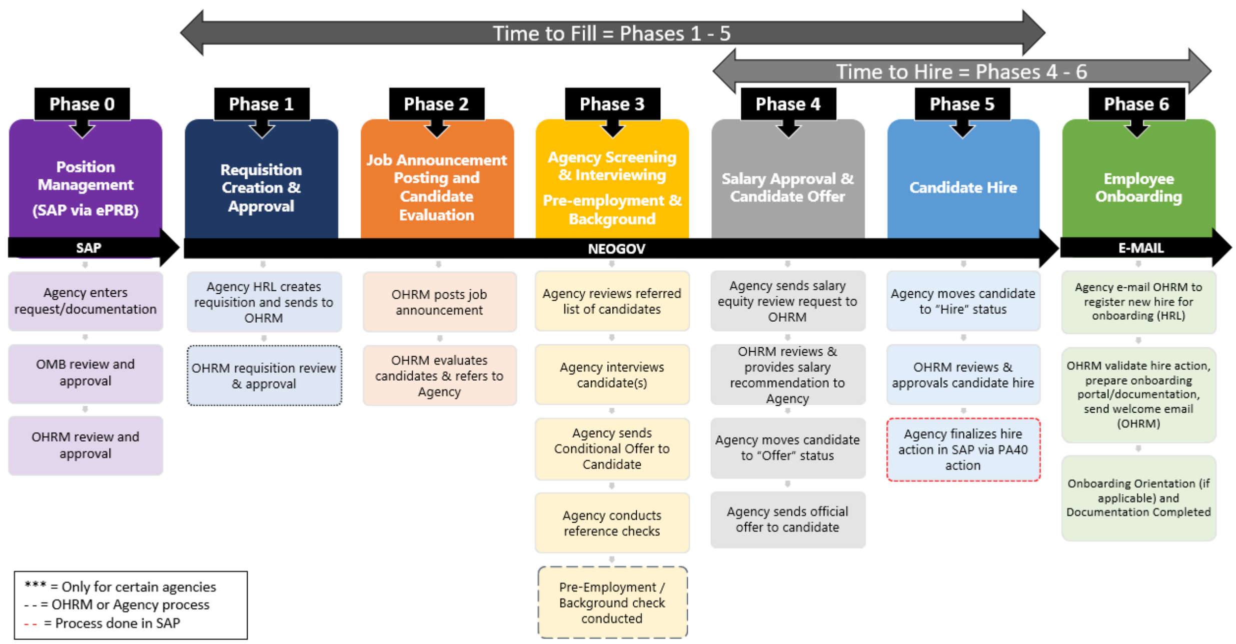
Interviewing documentation is maintained by the hiring Agency's HRL in a confidential file for a period of four (4) years. Information may include:

- Interview questions
- Interview Panel's individual and composite notes and scores
- Applicants' references

Phases of the Recruitment and Hiring Process

Throughout the recruitment and hiring lifecycle, responsibilities change ownership between the Agencies, OHRM, and OMB multiple times. Figure 1 shows the seven phases of the OHRM recruitment and hiring process and details the different handoffs that occur during the recruitment lifecycle. This guide provides an overview of the seven phases in the recruitment and hiring process.

Figure 1 – The Seven Phases of the Recruitment and Hiring Lifecycle



*This chart is reflective of the non-Public Safety hiring process

Time to Fill

Time to Fill is a key initiative in the County and a critical component in the recruiting and hiring process. The time to fill calculation begins once a requisition is approved by the TA Analyst and ends when the hire is authorized. The entire time to fill process is made up of six (6) phases, as listed in Figure 2. These phases align with those that make up the recruiting and hiring process as described in Figure 1.

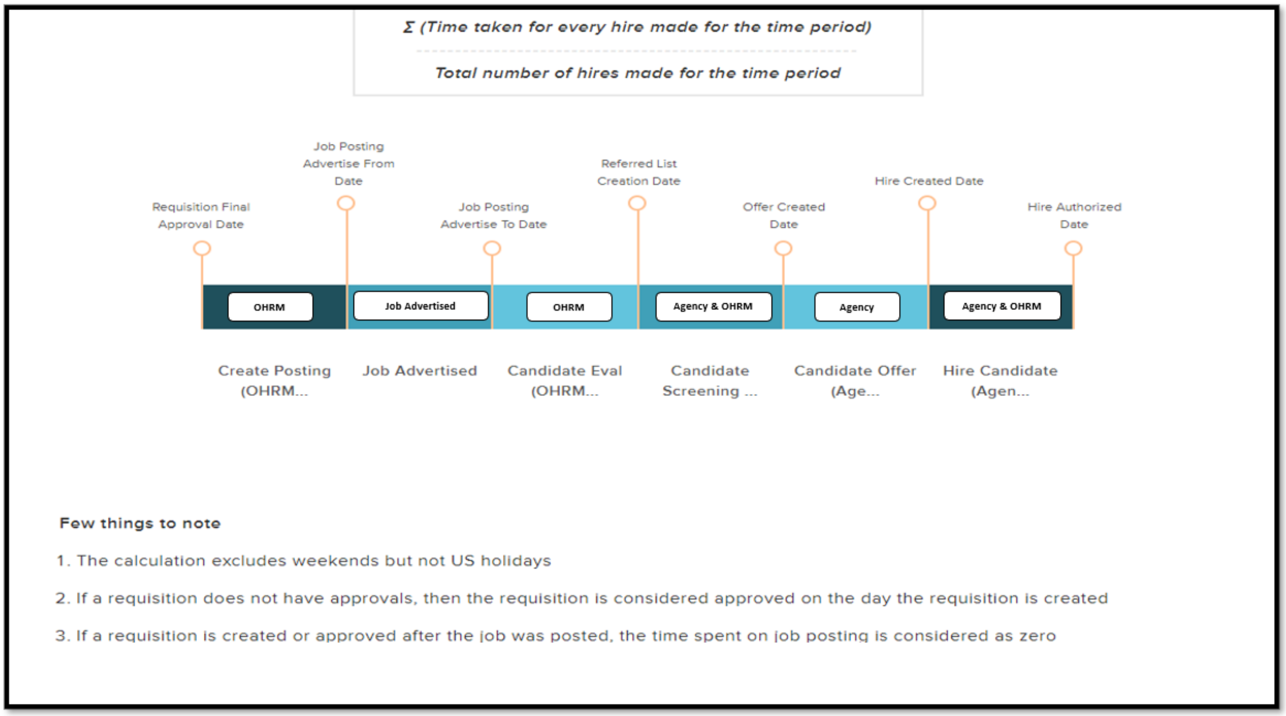


Figure 2 – Time to Fill Process

Time to Fill Reports

Time to Fill monthly reports are prepared for CountyStat and the Appointing Authority. The reports indicate the number of days to fill fulltime positions. These reports do not currently include Public Safety.

Recruitment Phases

The key to achieving an effective, efficient hiring process, which results in hiring the right person for the right position in a timely manner, is ensuring that a well-written position description aligns with the appropriate classification specification. Once you determine a need to fill a new or existing position, this section will help you prepare for the new hire.

Phase 0: Position Management (ePRB Approval Process) – Submitting your vacancy request through the ePRB approval process

1. Review of Collective Bargaining Agreements (if applicable)

Agencies that have unionized positions must follow the policy in the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA). The Agency HRL and TA Analyst should reference the respective CBA along with the Personnel Law and Administrative Procedures to ensure compliance with any recruitment activities.

2. Agency HRL Preparation of Justification Request and Supporting Documentation

For consideration, the Agency HRL must attach the following documentation in the ePRB:

- A justification memorandum (or business justification for Fast Tracks) from the Appointing Authority to the Directors of OMB and OHRM. The justification should reference the position classification and grade, the reason for the request to fill, reallocate or create, and the consequences if the request is not granted. Please note that the business justification field has a character limitation.
- An organizational chart showing the vacant position and the reporting relationships within the Agency.
- A Position Request Form (PRF) or Position Action Form (PAF), which provides the position details and is signed by the Agency's Fiscal Manager and Appointing Authority.
- A Position Description (Form 544) detailing the essential duties and tasks to be completed by the incumbent of the position.

Agency HRLs and Hiring Managers should refer to the Classification Specifications when developing a position description.

Refer to the job aids and trainings for additional guidance: Recruiting and Hiring Resources

3. OMB Review (Approval, Denial, or Return for Correction)

OMB will verify if the requested position is authorized and funded. If neither is the case, the request will be denied.

OMB may elect to approve an authorized, but unfunded position; however, the Agency will not be able to recruit until funding has been established. OMB may also return the request to the author for correction or additional information.

4. OHRM Review (Approval, Denial, or Return for Correction)

OHRM will review for the completion and accuracy of the justification, position description, and the electronic submission information.

If any of the documentation is missing or inaccurate, OHRM may deny or return the request to the author for correction.

Phase 1: Requisition Creation and Approval

Once an Agency has completed the position management process and received approval via the ePRB workflow and the Hiring Manager is prepared with an interview panel, the Agency HRL will create a requisition in NEOGOV and submit the request to the TA Analyst to approve and post the job and recruit candidates.

1. Agency Confirms Position is Funded by OMB

Just as in Phase 0, the Agency must ensure that the position request is funded by OMB for the applicable fiscal year.

2. Agency Consults with Class and Comp

The Agency HRL should refer to the Classification Plan and Classification Specifications to assist in determining the appropriate class of work, and to confirm the minimum qualifications for the classification specification. Reviewing the examples of work and the level and scope of responsibility can assist with determining the grade level.

The Class and Comp Analysts are available for consultation and review of position descriptions (Form 544).

3. Agency HRL Creates Requisition in NEOGOV

Once the position is approved through the ePRB process, the Agency HRL will create the requisition in NEOGOV. This requisition will alert the TA Analyst that a position is ready for approval for posting and recruitment.

4. OHRM Reviews and Approves Requisitions

A thorough review of the requisition is conducted by the TA Analyst prior to approval. If changes are warranted, the TA Analyst will communicate with the HRL.

Phase 2: Job Announcement Posting and Candidate Evaluation

1. Agency Completes Job Announcement Form (JAF)

The Job Announcement Form (JAF) is a required document when an Agency wants to post a position, both external/open and promotional, to the Prince George's County Careers page for recruitment. The JAF is essential because it collects pertinent information from the Agency that is needed to create a job announcement. This includes items such as: position attributes, job duties, minimum qualifications, preferred qualifications, and conditions of employment. Minimum qualifications noted on the JAF should match the Classification Specification for the position. The JAF is completed by both the Hiring Manager and the Agency HRL.

2. OHRM Posts Recruitment Announcement

A recruitment announcement can be open (i.e., for the general public), promotional (i.e., for County employees only) or by invitation only (i.e., for exempt service or a specific promotional group, such as promotional for Public Safety sworn positions). Table 2 depicts the duration a recruitment announcement is open by the type of posting.

Table 2 – Recruitment Announcement Posting Durations

Type of Posting	Duration
Open Recruitment	5 – 30 days
AFSCME Open Recruitment	14 days
Administrative Aide Recruitment	5 – 10 days
Promotional – County Employees Only	5 – 30 days
Invitation Only (Temporary and Exempt Service)	2 – 30 days

Depending on the type of recruitment announcement, OHRM will consult with the Agency HRL for recommended days the announcement will be published.

3. Recruitment Strategies are Deployed

Jobs posted through NEOGOV are fed through Governmentjobs.com, Indeed, and LinkedIn. Agencies should also consider:

- Posting via OHRM's Handshake Account
- Posting via the Hiring Agency's social media platforms
- Posting on job boards at universities/colleges and trade schools
- Posting on job boards at professional organizations
- Posting to Youth@Work/SYEP candidate pool

4. OHRM Evaluates Candidates for minimum qualifications and refers to hiring Agency

The TA Analysts evaluate the application package for each applicant. Applicants that do not provide sufficient information or documents to support their qualifications will be dispositioned to an ineligible status.

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum qualifications are defined as the minimum level of knowledge (through education and/or work experience), skills, and abilities that are required to perform the essential job functions assigned to a position. TA Analysts will screen applicants based on the minimum qualification statement on the recruitment announcement. Candidates that meet the minimum qualifications are placed on an eligibility register.

Preferred Qualifications

Preferred qualifications are qualifications (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that are "ideal" for an applicant to possess, but not necessary to perform the essential job functions (or primary duties) assigned to a position.

The hiring Agency may have preferred qualifications which exceed the minimum qualifications. Candidates that meet the preferred qualifications will be considered highly qualified and will be referred for consideration along with candidates that meet minimum qualifications.

Equivalencies for Education and Experience

Recruitment announcements by OHRM must have a minimum qualification statement. Some may state that an equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered. If this statement is not on the announcement, there are no equivalencies considered.

When considering an applicant's qualifications and if they meet those specified in a job announcement, the following education and experience equivalencies will apply (unless otherwise specified in the job announcement).

- Undergraduate Education: A year of undergraduate education is thirty (30) semester hours, forty-five (45) quarter hours, or the equivalent of college study. This education must have been obtained in an accredited college or university for which high school graduation or the equivalent was a prerequisite.

  Schools either use a quarter or semester system. Bachelor’s degrees require between 120 and 130 semester units, or between 180 and 195 quarter units. To convert quarter units to semester units, multiply by two thirds; to convert semester units to quarter units, multiply by 1.5.

- Graduate Education: In the absence of specific graduate program information, a year of graduate education is eighteen (18) semester hours or twenty-seven (27) quarter hours of graduate level college course work, or the number of credit hours the school attended has determined to represent one (1) year of full-time study. This education must have been obtained in an accredited college or university.

- Substituting Experience for Education
  One (1) year of relevant work experience may be substituted for one (1) year of required education. “Relevant experience" means if the position requires a bachelor's degree in a specified field, the work experience must be in the specified or related field at the professional level. Two (2) additional years of relevant experience may be substituted for a master’s degree.

  Note: For example, if the position requires a bachelor's degree in accounting, the work experience must be in accounting/finance-related at the professional level to be considered for substitution.

- Substituting Education for Experience
  One (1) year of relevant education at the undergraduate or graduate level may be substituted for one (1) year of required work experience, unless otherwise stated on the job announcement. Successful completion of progressive education of a course of study leading to a bachelor's or higher degree is credited at 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours. Thus, thirty (30) semester hours or 45 quarter hours of progressive study is comparable to one (1) year of undergraduate education. In general, when equating education and experience, 2.5 credit hours is equivalent to one month of experience (one quarter hour equals 0.75 credit hours).

Please note there may be positions in which there is no substitution for experience (i.e., supervisor experience, positions that require licenses and/or certifications, etc.). Accordingly, candidates that do not meet the specified criteria will be considered ineligible.

Level of Experience

Only related professional-level experience will be credited for professional positions. Non-professional level experience may not be substituted for the required professional level experience. In certain instances, non-professional experience may be substituted for educational requirements (i.e., preparation of financial or other analytical statements is professional where bookkeeping is paraprofessional).

Specialized Training

Relevant specialized training completed in non-credit programs may be considered, provided that the total classroom hours for each course can be documented. Equivalency is on an hour-for-hour basis for relevant training. One full work year is equivalent to 2,080 hours.

Volunteer Experience

Credit for pertinent volunteer experience with welfare, civic, service organizations, etc., with or without compensation, may be granted. The employment application and/or resume must clearly describe the actual amount of time spent in such work; for example, indicate the average hours volunteered per week or per month. Complete volunteer work history information, including dates and duties, just as for a paid position, must be listed on the application.

- One (1) full-time year of experience at 40 hours per week is 2,080 hours
- One (1) part-time year of experience is considered 1,040 hours

Transferrable Skills

Transferrable skills are the skills (aptitude and knowledge) individuals gather through work, sports, volunteering, hobbies, or other life experiences. Equivalency for identifiable transferable skills will be calculated in the same manner as volunteer experience.

Proficiency Examinations

Some positions require candidates to pass a proficiency examination prior to being referred to the hiring Agency, such as:

- Account Clerk
- Administrative Aide
- Public Safety Emergency Call Taker and Dispatcher

Veteran Preference

Applicants may request a preference if they meet the qualifications outlined on the employment application. Eligible veterans that meet the minimum qualifications for the applied position, will receive a 10-point hiring preference.

When an eligible veteran submits the required documentation to their employment application at the time of apply, they will be considered for an interview.

Phase 3: Agency Screening and Interviewing / Pre-Employment and Background Check

1. Agency reviews referred list of candidates

Once the list of candidates has been referred to the Agency, anyone listed in the *Hiring Manager* field on the approved NEOGOV requisition will receive a notification. At this point, the Agency should screen the list of referred candidates and identify the top talent to be interviewed.

Three (3) things to remember when the candidate screening begins:

1. Review the classification specification, position description, job announcement, and identify the most important Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) and other criteria needed to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
2. Review the resume of EVERY candidate on the referral list, focusing on the KSAs and other criterion with the intent of selecting candidates for interview.
3. Identify candidates to interview based on their possession of these KSAs.

   Note: Please remember that all candidate information is confidential. You may not discuss candidate names, interview questions, rating categories, or any other information pertaining to candidates or the rating process with anyone not directly involved in the selection process.

2. Disposition candidates in the NEOGOV OHC Hire Workflow

As candidates move through the Agency interviewing process, their statuses should be updated accordingly within NEOGOV. For example, once an Agency has identified a candidate as someone they are not moving forward with in the next step of the interviewing process, the Agency should move that candidate to *Rejected* status and send the candidate a notification.

3. Agency interviews candidates

Interview Preparation

This section explains how to select the interview panel, develop behavioral-based interview questions, and establish the evaluation criteria.

Behavioral-based interviews focus on discovering how a candidate performed in specific work-related situations. This interview technique seeks to uncover how a potential employee behaved in each situation; not on how he/she/they might behave in the future. The premise behind this technique is that a good predictor of future performance is how someone performed in the past in a similar situation. Behavioral-based interviews are common throughout industry and government.

Many candidates are familiar with this technique and are well-prepared for these interviews. Candidates can and should draw on previous work-related experiences as well as non-work-related experiences (e.g., school projects, community involvement) that are relevant to the interview questions.

Composition of Interview Panel

- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and individuals familiar with the job and its knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) are preferred panel members.

- Panels should consist of an odd number of members, when possible, to break ties in the decision-making process. Three (3) member panels are ideal.

- Panels should be diverse in gender, race/ethnicity, and age. Agencies should utilize other departments/Agency employees with the requisite subject matter knowledge as well as individuals who are not employed by the County so that diversity is achieved.

    - If using an interviewer that is not employed by the County, the Hiring Manager must notify the Agency HRL, so he/she/they can provide training/materials on the interview process.

- Individuals who served as SMEs in the rating process for the position cannot be interviewers in the selection process to ensure a fair and impartial process.
    - For a few "unique" positions, interview panel members may be a lower grade than the position interviewing for. Departments should check with their TA Analyst to discuss appropriate situations for this exception.

Developing Behavioral-based Interview Questions and Evaluation Criteria

- As much as possible, all questions should relate to experiences that have occurred in the last 2-3 years (best for recollection of behavioral details).

- All behavioral interview questions should focus on what the candidate did, said, felt, or thought in the past. The interviewer should be looking for phrases such as "I did….," "I said….," etc.

- Do not ask questions about what the candidate <u>would do</u> in each situation or what they would have done differently. The focus is on what the candidate <u>actually</u> did, said, thought, or felt in the past. If the candidate uses such phrases as "I would," the interviewer should probe by saying, "What did you actually do at that time?"

- The candidate should focus on what he/she/they did, rather than what "we" did. While working as part of a team is very common and desirable, it is important to understand what the candidate's individual role was. The interviewer should probe the interviewee if "we" is used in describing actions. For example, if the candidate says, "We implemented the new payroll system by…," it is the interviewer's job to ask the candidate what his/her/their role was and what he/she/they actually did as an individual.

- Prior to delving into the detail of each question, ask the candidate to provide a brief (30 second) overview of the situation by highlighting the beginning, middle, and end. This helps the interviewer to keep the interview on track. For example, if you feel lost in the discussion, you can pause the conversation by asking the interviewee where you are in the story (beginning, middle, or end).

Conducting the Interview

- Make sure that the interview panel members understand the requirements of the job, the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), and other criterion.

- Make sure that all panel members understand the interview questions, evaluation process, and evaluation criteria prior to beginning the interviews.

- Maintain fairness and equity by keeping the panel and questions consistent for all candidates for the position and remind panel members of the importance of remaining impartial and maintaining confidentiality of the selection interview process; information is given to appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis.

Interview Panel Responsibilities

- Stay focused on the job and its requirements.

- Interview panel members must complete an individual evaluation form.

- Complete the individual evaluation of one candidate before moving on to the next one.

- As a group, interview panel members must complete a consensus evaluation form for each candidate interviewed. Care should be taken to only record remarks that relate to the requirements of the job on these forms, as they will become a permanent record of the selection process.

- Once all candidates have been interviewed, panel members should review their evaluation forms and determine the top candidate(s), based on evaluations received in the interview.

- County procedure requires that all records be kept for four (4) years. All selection material, including how candidates were selected for interview (if not all are interviewed), evaluation forms, and interview notes should be placed in a file and maintained by the Agency HRL in case they are ever needed by OHRM.

- Utilize interview evaluation criteria and forms to evaluate responses to the questions for each applicant.

Five (5) key actions that all hiring Agencies must take prior to conducting the selection of candidates to interview:

- Review all the applications and determine the candidates to be interviewed.

- Notify OHRM in writing of any family members that appear on the referral list of candidates (a.k.a. certificate of eligible) who are related to the Appointing Authority or designee, HRL, or Hiring Manager.
- In accordance with *Personnel Law Section 16-150 – Nepotism*, no Appointing Authority shall fill or request to fill any vacant position in the classified service under the Appointing Authority's jurisdiction with a family member. Family members include spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, brother- or sister-in-law, mother- or father-in-law, or son- or daughter-in-law. Upon notification of the conflict of interest, OHRM will consult with the Office of Ethics and Accountability to determine if there is a conflict and will provide guidance to the HRL.
- Per [AP 208 – Methods of Filing Positions], an Agency must notify and attempt to interview at least five (5) individuals whose names appear on the eligibility list provided by OHRM, for the first vacancy, plus one (1) additional candidate for each additional vacancy.
- Adhere to the selection goals and timetables established in the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan when considering candidates for appointment or promotion.

3. Agency submits a conditional offer

Where a candidate must complete a pre-employment background check (medical, drug and alcohol, credit, etc.), the Agency must provide a conditional offer.

4. Agency conducts reference checks

Note: For the purposes of this guide, a "reference" is a person (e.g., supervisor, coworker, colleague) whom the Hiring Manager or HRL can talk with regarding the candidate's past performance.

Reference checking is a vital part of a successful hiring strategy and is primarily used to verify information provided by the candidate and gain additional knowledge about the candidate's abilities. It will also provide insight into a candidate's job performance, work behaviors, and address any "red flags." Reference checks should be conducted prior to making a conditional offer to an applicant, regardless of the position or whether the candidate is an internal or external applicant.

Though typically only the top candidate's references are checked, you may check references for multiple candidates if you need additional information in order to rank finalists. References should be requested from the candidate(s) and authorization given prior to any reference check taking place.

Preparing for the Reference Check

The purpose of checking references is to verify the candidate's work and performance history in order to select the best-qualified applicant for the job. It is best practice to contact at least three (3) professional references which should include previous employers for the finalist. There are instances where it is not possible to collect three relevant references, such as when the candidate has worked for the same employer for most of their career. References must be checked prior to making a conditional job offer. Typically, the person who will be making the final hiring decision checks the top candidates' references. Alternatively, the Agency HRL may check references using the OHRM Reference Verification Form.

Contacting multiple references can be beneficial to gather different perspectives on a candidate's skills and abilities. Typically, candidates provide three (3) references upon request to the Agency HRL or Hiring Manager to contact or you may contact past employers provided on the employment application. If those references are not available, or if additional perspectives are desired, you can ask the candidate for additional references.

The reference should have been able to directly observe the candidate and be of a professional nature (i.e., previous or current supervisors, coworkers, professors, etc.) and not personal (i.e., friends, relatives, etc.).

References who have had the most recent contact with the candidate may be better able to provide specific and accurate feedback. Less recent references may not be aware of new skills the candidate may have developed. Alternately, there may be circumstances where a less recent reference has the best knowledge of the competencies that are most important for the position to be filled. Accordingly, you will need to use judgment and weigh the information references provide appropriately to the situation.

Conducting Reference Checks

- State the purpose of the call or opening message of the email and briefly describe the position for which the applicant has applied.
- Confirm the relationship between the person giving the reference and the applicant.
- Verify basic data such as job title, functions, and dates of employment.
- Ask questions provided on the reference check form about the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the vacant position. These questions are designed to elicit the reference's observations of the applicant's work behaviors.

Remember

Keep in mind, a previous employer may have rules regarding supplying references and may provide only the position title, dates of employment, salary, and eligibility for rehire. If this is the case, it should be documented on the reference check form.

Some organizations may have a policy of not providing references when contacted because of potential liability in the misrepresentation of information. If this is the case, it should not be held against the job applicant. Organizations with this policy typically provide no information, either pro or con. In such instances, the withholding of information should not be viewed as negative.

Internal Applicants

If an internal employee is the final candidate, the Hiring Manager or Agency HRL should notify the employee that they will be contacting the candidate's supervisor to obtain a reference.

Reference Check Fundamentals

- Identify yourself immediately, including your position, and tell the reference why you are calling.
- If the reference is unavailable or hesitant, offer to have the reference call you back or offer to call them back at a designated time to provide the information. A follow-up e-mail to confirm or request a call back could also be used to help affirm your legitimacy.
- Assure the reference that the information discussed will be held in confidence.
- If a company or individual will not provide an employment verification or reference without a release form, you may note the individual's statement from the last page of the application as they have electronically signed and authorized the release of this information.
- Tell the reference about the position for which the candidate is being considered and the key traits you are looking for in an employee within that position.
- Establish a comfortable rapport with the reference. Try a conversational approach, ask for examples, and welcome opportunities for "story telling."
- Be alert for obvious pauses which may indicate the reference may have other information to share but is hesitant.
- Validate the information provided on the application or resume and obtained during the interview - look for misrepresentations and inflations.
- The same topics that are prohibited in an interview are prohibited during a reference check. These types of questions should be avoided:

DO NOT ASK: Has the candidate…

- ever filed a discrimination suit against your company?
- ever filed a Workers' Compensation claim?
- had personal financial difficulties?
- had any disabilities or health problems?
- ever been arrested?
- ever been married or had children?

Note: If the reference provides any unsolicited personal information, especially if related to any of the topics above, disregard and do not document or retain.

- Don't end the conversation until you are sure you know the opinion of the reference.
- Always remember to thank the reference for their time and ask if you may follow up with them if more information is needed.
- Check references thoroughly. Spending a little more time now can save you a lot of time, resources, and frustration down the road.

5. Agency submits candidate to OHRM Background and Compliance for background and suitability

Pre-Employment Background Checks

Pre-employment screenings or background checks are required for each individual selected. Pre-employment screenings may consist of, but are not limited, to:

- Verification of prior employment (i.e., dates, salary, etc.).
- Professional references (minimum of three managerial/supervisory level).
- Education (if relevant to the position).
- Professional license (if required for the position).

Certain positions are subject to enhanced pre-employment screenings and background checks which may include:

- Criminal history check
- Medical or Pre-Employment physical
- Drug and alcohol test
- Credit check
- Drivers' license and history

Requesting Pre-Employment Background Screenings

The following documents must be submitted to OHRM at Backgrounds@co.pg.md.us to initiate the pre-employment background screening:

- Signed Conditional Offer Letter - Conditional offers of employment must contain language outlining the requirement to successfully complete pre-employment screenings and receive a favorable suitability recommendation
- Completed Form 306, Applicant Supplemental Questionnaire and Authorization for Release of Information
- Position Description

The candidate will receive emails with instructions on accessing the third-party background screening platform to provide identifying information and complete the disclosure forms.

Results Notifications for Pre-Employment Background Screenings

Pre-employment background screening results will be provided to the HRL who will notify the appropriate hiring authority of results. Table 3 defines the determination based on the result of the pre-employment background screening.

Table 3 – Pre-Employment Background Screening Results Determinations

Result	Determination
Favorable Background Results	If no derogatory or disqualifying information is identified, the hiring process may proceed. The Agency HRL will authorize a Final Offer Letter with start date.
Unfavorable Background Results	If derogatory or disqualifying information is identified, the Hiring Manager, along with OHRM,

	will determine if the department should proceed with the hiring process.

Note: Recipients of background check information or results are required to maintain confidentiality and only share information with authorized individuals in accordance with County regulations. Penalties for improper and unauthorized disclosure of background check information may include termination of employment for just cause.

Phase 4: Salary Approval and Candidate Offer

OHRM is responsible for reviewing and approving the recommended salary offer to be presented to the candidate. When Classification and Compensation receives a Salary Equity Analysis Form, the request is assigned to a Class and Comp Analyst for review and validation. In addition to reviewing the package for completeness, the Class and Comp Analyst reviews the salary recommendation as it relates to:

- Placement within the salary range to ensure that the candidate is placed appropriately based on his/her/their qualifications (i.e., education, licenses and certifications, and years of relevant experience).
- Placement in comparison to current employees in the same job title within the County to ensure internal equity.

Responsibility of Class and Comp Analyst

- Review the submitted Salary Analysis Equity Form and supporting documentation.
- Evaluate pay equity among the current employees' salaries and candidate's proposed salary.
- Document concerns or recommendations, if any.
- Render a decision and forward the signed Salary Equity Analysis Form to hiring Department/Agency within five (5) business days of request.

1. Agency submits a salary equity analysis recommendation for approval

Once an Agency has selected a candidate they would like to newly appoint or promote, the next step in the process is to submit a salary approval package and supporting documentation to the Class and Comp Analysts at OHRMClassification@co.pg.md.us.

2. Salary Determination

The Hiring Agency is responsible for determining the initial salary offer and providing the offer recommendation and all supporting documents to OHRM at OHRMClassification@co.pg.md.us. for approval.

Request packages must include the following documents:

- Salary Equity Analysis Form – to be completed by the hiring Agency
- Agency Justification Memo – to be completed by the hiring Agency. The memo must include a brief explanation for the candidate selection.
- Position Description (Form 544) – The Position Description used in the requisition and posting should be submitted
- Candidate's Application Package – includes the application, resume, transcript, certification, and licenses, as applicable
- Copy of the approved Position Request Form (PRF
- OMB Salary Recommendation for position

Responsibility of the Hiring Agency:

- Complete the Salary Equity Analysis Form in its entirety.
- Document relevant education and work experience for each employee and the respective candidate.
- Conduct a salary analysis of similarly situated employees within the respective Department/Agency.
- Ensure that the proposed salary offer will not cause an inequity with other employees.
- Identify the basis for the request and justification.
- Include all supporting documentation with your submission to the OHRM Director.
- Maintain accurate records related to the salary request for a minimum of four (4) years.

Missing Information/Incomplete Form

The salary approval package will be sent back to the Agency via email when there is missing/inaccurate information or when the Class and Comp Analyst does not agree with the recommended salary based on an equitable review. The Class and Comp Analyst will also initiate discussion with the Agency regarding any issue with the salary recommendation.

3. Agency Moves Candidate to Offered Status

Once the offer has been extended to the candidate, the Agency HRL or Hiring Manager will disposition the candidate to the *Offered* status in the NEOGOV OHC Workflow.

4. Agency Makes Final Offer to Candidate

Once the pre-employment background and suitability and salary approval have been authorized by OHRM, the hiring Agency may present the candidate a final offer of employment.

Phase 5: Candidate Hire

1. Once the candidate has accepted and returned the signed written offer, the Agency HRL moves candidate to *Hired* status

The Agency HRL or Hiring Manager will disposition the candidate to the Hired status in the NEOGOV OHC Workflow.

2. OHRM reviews and authorizes hire

TA Analyst reviews the request to hire candidate including information that will be loaded into SAP. The Agency HRL should be sure to upload and attach the following documentation with their Hire Action request:

- Salary equity analysis approved by ORHM Director or appointee
- Offer letter signed and accepted by the candidate

3. Agency finalizes hire in SAP and completes the PA40 action

The Agency HRL verifies and, if necessary, enters the employee's social security number, address information, and other employee documentation.

Phase 6: Employee Onboarding

1. Agency registers new hire for onboarding

Once an Agency is ready to onboard a new hire, the HRL must forward the new hire's full name including the middle initial, job title, salary schedule, and start date to the OHRM Core HR Division via email at OHRM-Onboarding@co.pg.md.us, along with the submitted new hire documents:

- Offer letter signed by the Appointing Authority and the new employee acknowledging acceptance
- Approved Position Requisition Form (PRF) for the position being filled by the new employee
- County Employment Application (and resume if provided)
- Applicable commitment agreements
- Applicable Personal Services Agreement (for Limited-Term-Grant-Funded employees)
- Copy of the printed Personnel Information Document (PID)
- Checklist for Submission of Competitive and Non-Competitive Actions

All employee onboarding resources and past communication can be found in the HR Community Teams site in the Employee Onboarding folder.

2. OHRM CoreHR sends welcome notice to new hire and prepares for new employee orientation

Welcome notice should provide specifics about where to report and to whom, date and time to report, location, and be written in a hospitable tone.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- How do I gain access to the SAP ePRB system?

To gain access, you must complete the ePRB training in the NeoGov LMS. Once training is completed, you will need to submit a request to your Agency IT Coordinator so that they can submit a ticket to the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) SAP security team to assign access.

- How do I gain access to NEOGOV?

To gain access to NEOGOV's Online Hiring Center (OHC), you will need to complete NEOGOV HRL training and submit an email with a copy of your certificate to OHRMRecruitment@co.pg.md.us with subject line: NEOGOV Access Request

- Where do I locate job aids and forms needed for recruitment?

All NEOGOV How-To-Guides and an overview of the recruitment and hiring process can be found online at Recruitment and Hiring Resources | Prince George's County, MD (princegeorgescountymd.gov).

- How do I disposition a candidate in the OHC Candidate Workflow?

Instructions on dispositioning candidates through the workflow can be found in the NEOGOV OHC Guide-Referral List and Candidate Management guide.

- Is there a recruitment grievance or appeal process?

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 220 – Grievance, Adverse Actions and Appeals Procedures and Personnel Law Section 16-200, an employee may file a written appeal within five (5) days of the eligibility notification to the Office of Human Resources Management at OHRMRecruitment@co.pg.md.us.

- How do I file a discrimination complaint?

The Office of Human Rights is committed to the pursuit of justice for those harmed by discriminatory behavior, including the denial of services, and enforces language access to equal government services for all. To file a complaint of discrimination, contact OHR to learn more.

OHRM Staffing Directory

Office of the Director	Director's Office	OHRM@co.pg.md.us
	Employee and Labor Relations	EmployeeRelations@co.pg.md.us
	Level Up Employee Wellness Program	LevelUp@co.pg.md.us
	Occupational Medical Services	disabilityleave@co.pg.md.us fmla@co.pg.md.us
People Operations	Core HR	CoreHR@co.pg.md.us
	HR Service Management Unit – Records Management Team	HRService@co.pg.md.us
	HR Service Management Unit – Policy and Planning Team	OHRMPolicy@co.pg.md.us
	Learning, Performance, and Organizational Development	LPOD@co.pg.md.us EmployeePerformance@co.pg.md.us
Benefits and Pensions	Benefits Administration	Benefits@co.pg.md.us
	Pensions	PGCDeferredComp@co.pg.md.us
	Retirement Services	Pensions@co.pg.md.us
Office of Talent Management and Acquisition	Background and Compliance	PSI@co.pg.md.us
	Classification and Compensation	OHRMClassification@co.pg.md.us
	Public Safety Promotional Examinations	OHRMExaminations@co.pg.md.us
	Talent Acquisition	OHRMRecruitment@co.pg.md.us
	Youth@Work/Summer Youth Enrichment Program	SYEP@co.pg.md.us