

City of Red Bluff  
Administrative Policies & Procedures – Personnel Manual

<b>Subject:</b>  Screening, Interview & Eligibility List Process		<b>Number:</b> 22-15
		<b>Effective Date:</b> 10/17/2023
<b>Departments Affected:</b> All		<b>Supersedes (Number/Date):</b>
<b>Authority:</b>  Section 2.82-A. Red Bluff City Code	<b>File References:</b>	
	<b>Approved:</b> Approved by City Council on: 10/17/2023	

**Overview:** The City of Red Bluff is committed to ensuring the methods and techniques used in our hiring practices result in the appointment of the most qualified applicants. The intent of this rule is to provide effective tools for screening, evaluating, and interviewing all potential job candidates.

**Applicable to:** All employees

**Guidelines:** The importance of identifying intelligent, motivated, and dedicated employees and placing those employees in critical positions within the City of Red Bluff cannot be overemphasized. The City of Red Bluff must ensure the selection process is nondiscriminatory, reliable, valid, legal, and cost-effective.

**SCREENING**

A comprehensive screening process not only assists with ensuring the City of Red Bluff maintains an exceptional level of employees in our work force, but also contributes to minimizing challenges which may arise from ineffective hiring practices. Because each hiring decision can have long term ramifications, fair, honest, and consistent applicant screening practices are essential to preserving the integrity of our organization and may contribute to reducing agency liability.

Applications and accompanying materials may contain sensitive information, such as the applicant’s home address and driver’s license number. This information must be kept confidential and shall not be shared outside those directly involved in the screening process.

Application materials must be screened by at least two reviewers. Screening of applications may be done by the Department Head, supervisor, Human Resources Department, or City Manager. Sufficient time should be spent to ensure a fair and thorough review of all applications, including all attached materials.

The following information has been identified as effective strategies and tactics for screening applications. Department heads or designees may utilize their own methods and techniques for screening applications, as long as they align with the basic fundamentals of this rule.

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**EEO Policy Statement**

The City of Red Bluff provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic, protected by federal, state, or local laws.

**Pre-screening Applications**

The first step in the screening process is to review applications and confirm the candidates have met the minimum qualifications, or other pre-determined criteria, for appointment. A screening checklist may be utilized to help the reviewer verify the qualifications for employment.

Those applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications, or other preferred criteria, should be removed from consideration. Only well-qualified candidates will be forwarded to the next phase in the selection process.

Meeting the minimum qualifications does not guarantee a candidate will advance to the next step in the selection process. Other considerations may be made when evaluating applications, such as neatness, expired certifications or licensures, important areas left blank, and grammar or spelling errors.

**Application Screening**

Applicants who have moved through the first tier in the screening process will receive a more thorough evaluation for completeness, education, training, and experience. All considerations and judgments will be based on the requirements outlined in the classification specification. An application screening matrix may be used for this portion of the application screening.

**Examinations**

Those applicants who pass the second phase of application screening may be asked to undergo an examination process to further assess their qualifications for the position. This process may include written and/or oral examinations. Examinations will serve as a valid measurement of an individual's knowledge and understanding of factors associated with successful job performance. The City will determine the passing score for each examination.

**Recommendation to Interview**

Any candidate who is eliminated during any part of the screening process shall be notified by mail, regular or electronic, by the Human Resources Department.

**INTERVIEWS**

Applications for City of Red Bluff positions are submitted through the on-line recruitment software program. Interviews may not take place until after the application deadline has closed. The department, along with Human Resources, may review the applications anytime during the recruitment process and begin making appointments for interviews with the candidates. However, the review process is not over until the deadline listed on the job posting and all candidates

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have been considered.

Interviews are generally administered in partnership with Human Resources.

**Panel Selection**

Interview panels are advantageous because hiring decision input is provided from multiple sources, rather than one source. An employee from the Human Resources Department should participate in each panel. Interview panels for the first round of interviews should consist of three to five members. Other panel members may be supervisor-level employees who work within the department, someone who works directly with the department, someone who may have experience or knowledge with hiring practices and procedures, an objective outsider, or a subject matter expert within the specific occupational field.

The Human Resources panel member (unless another senior manager is selected by Department Head) should be designated to lead the applicant through the interview process. This person should welcome the applicant, introduce the panel members, confirm the job title and department, and provide the applicant with a brief overview of how the interview will be administered. The overview should inform the candidate of the time limit and the number of questions to be asked.

**Interview Questions**

The best practice for creating questions would be to determine the ideal qualities of the candidate and formulate the questions to best address those qualities. It is also useful to ask questions that will have unique responses from each candidate to determine individual abilities. Avoid questions that provoke the usual rehearsed responses. Questions should be open-ended to allow candidates to expand on their personal strengths and characteristics. In addition, open ended questions help the panel members evaluate the applicant's communication skills, ability to problem solve, and their level of interest in the occupational field. Therefore, the usefulness of each interview question should be examined thoroughly.

Interview questions may only be asked if they are exclusively job related, so questions must be limited to an applicant's knowledge, education, skills (including soft skills), and experience. Keep in mind that federal and state employment laws prohibit employers from asking questions which are irrelevant to whether or not the candidate is capable of performing the essential functions of the position. It is pertinent interviewers avoid asking questions which could be construed as evidence of unlawful discrimination. The interview panel may not ask questions relating to:

- A person's protected class, such as; race, color, sex, sexual orientation, citizenship, marital status, ethnicity, age, religion, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, national origin and ancestry, political affiliation, creed, military or veteran status (type of discharge), physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, number and/or ages of children or dependents, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law
- Citizenship
- A physical or mental disability (even if the candidate is clearly disabled)
- Financial status (credit history or bankruptcy)
- Arrests or convictions
- Prior salary, compensation, or benefits (You may ask candidates about their salary expectations.)

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- Place of residence
- Physical appearance
- Birthplace
- Relatives not employed by the City of Red Bluff
- Membership in nonprofessional organizations

To ensure interview questions are appropriate and legal, interview questions are reviewed and monitored by the Human Resources Department.

**Initial Interview Process**

Applicants may be interviewed in person, by video conference, or by other technological means. Regardless of the format, to reduce liability and ensure fair and legal employment practices, departments shall conduct “structured” interviews. In a structured interview, candidates are asked the same series of interview questions in the same order by the same interview panel. A typical interview will include ten to sixteen questions, divided equally among the panel, so each panel member has an opportunity to interact with the candidate.

Panel members are free to ask additional inquiries or follow up questions throughout the interview process. Prior to the interviews, the panel may wish to discuss what would be ideal responses so that follow-up questions would provide the intended information. Candidates should be allowed additional time to elaborate on their responses and ask clarifying questions. Statements which could be construed as an offer of employment or creating an employment contract should be avoided.

At the end of the interview, the applicant will be given an opportunity to provide additional information or ask questions of the panel members. This is also the candidate’s opportunity to make sure the position will be a good fit for them.

Each panel member will use a method of scoring or ranking candidates with predetermined criteria by using the standard City Interview Rating Sheet.

**Subsequent Interview Process (Optional)**

Departments may elect to conduct more than one interview. Subsequent interviews may be conducted with a panel or as a one-on-one with the Department Head/City Manager. If multiple interviews are held, the first interview is typically intended to be a screening interview in which the interview panel’s function is to assess whether the applicant has the basic skills to perform the job.

Subsequent interviews are an opportunity for reexamination and clarification. The subsequent interview should include more detailed questions with the goal of narrowing the focus to specific qualifications or personal characteristics which are of particular interest. The department may want to include different panel members in order to gather input from a broader selection of sources. As with the first interview, interview questions should be prepared in advance and all applicants should be asked the same series of questions, in the same order.

The Department Head/City Manager may want to conduct the subsequent interviews as a one-on-one with the top candidate/s. Although the process may be more personable and less structured, the Department Head/City Manager should still adhere to the law when asking questions. This is an additional opportunity for

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candidates to make sure the position will be a good fit for them.

**Interviewees Not Selected**

The Human Resources Department will contact unsuccessful candidates to inform them that they were not selected for the position.

**Accommodations**

Disabled applicants may make a request for reasonable accommodation during the interview process. Under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodation throughout all aspects of employment. Therefore, changes or adjustments should be made to ensure disabled applicants receive the same benefits and privileges as non-disabled applicants. If there are questions or concerns about an applicant's request for accommodation, contact the Human Resources Department for guidance.

**ELIGIBILITY LISTS**

An Eligibility list is an arrangement of candidates for City employment or promotion created as a result of a recruitment/examination process. Candidate placement shall occur based on scoring from the interview examination process. Eligibility lists are maintained in accordance with approved City established classification specifications listed on the Position Allocation List.

An established and active Eligibility list allows departments to offer employment to qualified applicants at the time the job vacancy occurs without having to undertake a formal recruitment.

**Types of Employment Lists**

Eligibility List

Candidates who meet the minimum qualifications and are successful in a recruitment shall be placed on an eligibility list for which the recruitment was held. Eligibility lists shall be used only within the department concerned.

Promotional List

Employees who are successful in an internal departmental promotional examination shall be placed on a promotional Eligibility list for the class in which the examination was held. Promotional Eligibility lists shall be established, and only available for use, within the department concerned.

**Establishing and Maintaining Employment Lists**

Candidates who have successfully passed each step in the recruitment or examination process will be placed on an appropriate Eligibility list. The Eligibility list will be established from the most qualified candidates and ranked according to the scoring established in the interview process. The selection of the successful candidate shall be made from the top candidate on the Eligibility list and proceed down the list if the first candidate declines or fails the pre-employment examination process or if another vacancy occurs while the Eligibility list remains active.

Preparation, approval, and maintenance of Eligibility lists shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Department.

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Eligibility list effective dates shall be the date the interview took place. The Eligibility list will be in effect for up to six months or one year, decided upon by the Department Head, in order to fill subsequent vacancies which occur during the life of the Eligibility list. An Eligibility list should remain in effect until the list has been exhausted or has expired.

Candidates who have been placed on any type of Eligibility list are responsible for notifying the hiring department or the Human Resources Department when their contact information has changed.

**Removal of Names**

Names shall be removed from an employment list after appointment, or when the employment list expires.

Human Resources may remove names from an eligibility list when the candidate:

- Declines a conditional offer of employment.
- Fails to respond to written inquiries, including emails from the Human Resources Department.
- Fails to pass any phase of the pre-employment process including physical examination, drug screening, or background investigation.
- Fails to continue to meet employment standards established for the classification.
- Upon request from the candidate.
- Fails to show up at a scheduled conditional offer of employment.

Individuals on an expired list must reapply to the new recruitment in order to compete for placement on the new list.

**References:** Americans with Disabilities Act [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov); Department of Fair Employment and Housing [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov); U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov); California Government Code §12952; California Labor Code §432.3; Civil Rights Act of 1964 §7, 42 U.S.C. §2000e et seq (1964); Military and Veterans Code §395-395.9; United States Code Title 38 §4301-4334 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994;