

Department of Human Resources

LOB #26:

EMPLOYEE SERVICES

Purpose

Employee Services supports optimizing employee performance; proactively applying disciplinary measures when necessary; ensuring employees accurately understand relevant laws, regulations, procedures and requirements governing employee and management actions; and enhancing employee and supervisory communication – the cornerstone of energized and aligned mission performance.

Description

Primary delegated authority for the work completed by Employee Services is derived from the Personnel Regulations as well as the Fairfax County Code.

On a daily basis, Employee Services staff works closely with key partners and stakeholders including HR managers, business partners in the offices of Human Rights and Equity Programs, Civil Service Commission, County Executive, County workgroups, employee representation groups and agency leaders to ensure that the work environment is productive, equitable and compliant and that employees are motivated, informed and engaged. The broad functional areas of Employee Services include the following:

- **Awards:** Provides organizational leadership, guidance, program administration, best practice input, and support for multiple awards events.
- **Central Information Services:** Serves as the initial point of contact for employee and non-employee interactions with the Department of Human Resources including telephone calls, emails and in-person visits.
- **Compliance:** Provides expert guidance, interpretation, review and legislative monitoring on employment laws, regulations, and guidelines.
- **Consulting and Education:** Troubleshoots complex employee relations matters with agency HR managers and leaders, collaboratively develops plans to address systemic and chronic employee relations issues, provides expert guidance and recommendations regarding discipline, behavioral issues, terminations, multi-faceted complex workplace issues, grievances and civil service commission hearings.
- **Training:** Designs, implements and supports a robust online training curriculum and multiple instructor-led training programs.
- **Grievance and Civil Service Commission:** Decision and process management.
- **Disciplinary Actions:** Guidance, review and document management.
- **Program Administration:** Employee Assistance Program, reasonable suspicion testing, medical testing, language stipend program, legislative liaison, document management, and policy and procedure development, guidance, interpretation, and implementation.
- **Performance Management:** Designs, develops and administers performance management systems including gathering feedback from employees and supervisors on a regular basis to support refinements to the system.

All work completed by the Employee Services supports the recruitment and retention of engaged and high performing employees who are the front line service providers to constituents. Additionally, this group supports achievement of the Fairfax County Employee Vision as well as countywide adherence to the Fairfax County Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics. Employee Services results are achieved through excellent customer service skills, broad human resources content knowledge, and strong subject matter expertise in the areas of employment law/regulations, employee relations, performance management, employee rewards, motivation and recognition.

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Benefits

The efforts of Employee Services directly benefit employees by providing efficient, effective and timely access to human resources information and operational support. The recognition derived from the countywide awards program increases employees' motivation. Employee Services also provides employees with a clear understanding of and accountability to the established standards for employee behavior and performance based on the performance management systems and reinforcement of the County's Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

Benefits to the organization include seamless change migrations to new HR policies based on collaborative work with employee group representatives, easier identification of high performing and high potential employees for succession management through the performance management system, and an enhanced organizational employment brand image and lower recruitment costs from the retention of a strong and satisfied employee base. Employee Services minimizes the organizational disruption and lost productivity associated with grievances and Civil Service proceedings by proactively addressing problems prior to the filing of grievances and by providing organizational support when a grievance is filed. Compliance efforts ensure clean audits and avoid penalties.

Mandates

Compliance with applicable laws, rules, regulations and procedural requirements is a primary focus for employee relations specialists in Employee Services. While compliance work is done in concert with partners such as the Offices of Human Rights and Equity Programs, County Attorney, County Executive, and Civil Service Commission and stakeholders such as County senior management and employee group representatives, Employee Services is viewed as the authoritative resource for employees countywide. Compliance monitoring and management is critical to the organization. However, compliance to pass audits and avoid fines is just part of the value added. Compliance, when woven into the fabric of the organization, promulgates a constructive and accountable organizational culture with high performing employees. Employee Services staff provides leadership and guidance to promote the understanding and implementation of human resources management practices stemming from federal, state and local laws, statutory guidelines and regulations, and organizational memoranda.

Within the County, Employee Services staff has primary responsibility for managing County human resources regulatory and procedural compliance documents and processes. Employee Services staff serves as the agency's legislative liaison and authors changes to Fairfax County Government Personnel Regulations and procedural memoranda. Staff works with the Civil Service Commission, Personnel and Reorganization Committee, Board of Supervisors and employee group representatives to capture broad-based input, complete public hearings and implement approved policy and procedure changes.

Trends and Challenges

Human resources trends linked to the Employee Services Line of Business include the following:

- Automating for work simplification and data/records management;
- Creating and sustaining productive stakeholder relationships with employee representation groups to promote collaborative problem solving and direction setting;
- Continuing to champion and reinforce inclusion strategies beyond traditional diversity factors;
- Continuing to refine performance management systems and processes;
- Providing leading edge consultation and guidance on emerging issues that affect organizational culture and employee behavior, such as social responsibility, volunteerism, and work/life balance;
- Shifting from a traditional cradle-to-grave employment approach to a "performance-centric" model; and

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- Increasing and harnessing employee engagement to improve performance levels and maximize employee discretionary energy.

Some of the challenges that Employee Services faces include the following:

- Implementing automation solutions using staff already allocated to performing daily operations;
- Shifting focus to address employee relations concerns and emerging issues proactively, flexibly and preemptively rather than operating in a reactionary mode;
- Taking action to increase employee engagement levels without getting mired in employee engagement surveys and processes;
- Sustaining outcome-oriented relationships with employee representation groups; and
- Seeking ways to integrate employee priorities like social responsibility, volunteerism and work/life balance into the employment brand image.

Resources

| Category | FY 2014 Actual | FY 2015 Actual | FY 2016 Adopted |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| LOB #26: Employee Services | | | |
| FUNDING | | | |
| <u>Expenditures:</u> | | | |
| Compensation | \$0 | \$0 | \$445,758 |
| Total Expenditures | \$0 | \$0 | \$445,758 |
| General Fund Revenue | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund | \$0 | \$0 | \$445,758 |
| POSITIONS | | | |
| <i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i> | | | |
| <u>Positions:</u> | | | |
| Regular | 0 / 0 | 0 / 0 | 6 / 6 |
| Total Positions | 0 / 0 | 0 / 0 | 6 / 6 |

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Metrics

| Metric Indicator | FY 2013 Actual | FY 2014 Actual | FY 2015 Actual | FY 2016 Estimate | FY 2017 Estimate |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number of customer calls managed through the employee services central call staff | NA | 22,246 | 26,297 | 26,800 | 27,500 |
| Number of countywide awards given | NA | 1,620 | 1,820 | 2,004 | 2,250 |
| Number of employee relations consultations | NA | 703 | 613 | 675 | 750 |

The Department is currently expanding the scope of the questions fielded by central call staff to allow professional and paraprofessional staff to perform other duties and address more complex matters. The increase in calls represents the shift to a more desirable staffing use plan. This approach reflects the agency's ongoing commitment to manage process and workflows efficiently and effectively, and is necessary as budget reductions have decreased staffing in the professional ranks.

The number of countywide awards given has trended upward in response to increased managerial attention to incentivizing and rewarding employees through the award program. This is increasingly important given limitations on direct and indirect compensation. Factors contributing to these increases include the promotion and education of staff regarding award options, the importance of awards and recognition, the increased visibility and prestige of awards, the simplification and streamlining of all aspects of the awards process, and potentially increasing the number and types of awards to support and align with strategic objectives.

A downward trend is seen in the number of employee relations consultations. This is, in part, due to agency HR Managers gaining relevant knowledge, skills and abilities and some employees now seeking guidance through employee group representatives. Key interests in increasing the number of Employee Relations consultations include ensuring consistent and accurate information dissemination, minimizing confusion and lack of trust arising when employees receive differing input, and the need to ensure staff provides consultative support to the topic areas most needed by customers and demanded by the organization. Factors contributing to enhanced performance include honing staff understanding of the customers' needs, clarifying roles and responsibilities with agency HR managers to minimize duplicative effort, and promoting services with employees to increase their awareness of this organization-provided support and information network.