

2010 DHS Hiring Reform Action Plan

Introduction

As the President's Hiring Reform initiative continues, DHS will focus on reviewing and upgrading existing procedures while also emphasizing the identification of innovative ways of doing business. The course of reform at DHS will align with the goals articulated by the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in May 2010, but DHS will also leverage economies of scale to institute much needed structure and standardization across the still young Department. In keeping with past successes, DHS will develop enterprise-wide reform strategies, and will consult with Components to identify innovative support actions that they will undertake. While some actions will be mandatory to comply with government-wide and DHS policies, other actions taken within Components will address their unique and most pressing challenges. The DHS Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) will oversee Hiring Reform and ensure coordination of efforts.

The specific tasks outlined in the DHS Action Plan will serve to promote four high-level objectives: 1) increase applicant satisfaction with the DHS hiring process; 2) increase hiring manager satisfaction with the DHS hiring process; 3) improve institutional understanding of Federal hiring; and 4) decrease the time required to hire new employees while increasing applicant quality.

The DHS Hiring Reform Action Plan contains four distinct focus areas, and each focus area is broken into specific numbered initiatives. In most cases, initiatives contain specific projects, a description of the barrier the projects address, actions DHS will undertake, target dates, responsible parties, and measures. The final page of the Action Plan is a timeline of milestones.

Contents

Focus Area 1: General Support Activities

Planning for effective communication and change management; instituting Hiring Reform rewards and recognition; and submitting OPM and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) deliverables

Page 2

Focus Area 2: Assessments and Application Evaluation

Eliminating essay style questions upon initial application; allowing straightforward applications based on résumés and/or valid, reliable assessments; moving towards to use of Category Rating; and notifying applicants of their application status

Page 3-4

Focus Area 3: Hiring Process Improvement

Addressing hiring process barriers; analyzing time-to-hire and manager and applicant satisfaction; and reducing time-to-hire for mission critical occupations (MCOs) and commonly filled positions

Page 5-6

Focus Area 4: Hiring Manager Involvement and Engagement

Clarifying hiring process roles and responsibilities for hiring managers; supporting increased manager involvement; and holding managers accountable for hiring efforts through performance management

Page 7

Timeline of Hiring Reform milestones

Page 8

Focus Area 1: General Support Activities

1		
Communicate strategy and manage change		
Create communications strategy to accompany the implementation of reform		
06/10	Create Hiring Reform communication plan	OCHCO
06/10	Analyze and document implementation barriers based on Component self-assessments due on 06/24	OCHCO
Launch Hiring Reform resource pages on OCHCO website		
08/10	Create initial materials for CHCO website describing the background of Hiring Reform and outlining important concepts	OCHCO
2		
Maintain internal Hiring Reform SWAT Team to manage Component implementation		
03/10	Reconvene SWAT Team and hold bi-weekly calls to share DHS strategy and address Component issues	OCHCO/ SWAT Team
10/10	Hold in-person SWAT Team meeting for a formal, Department-level status check on progress	OCHCO/ SWAT Team
01/11	Hold additional in-person SWAT Team meeting for a formal, Department-level status check on progress	OCHCO/ SWAT Team
3		
Institute internal reward structure for hiring process improvement		
08/10	Create formalized process for recognizing Component successes with Hiring Reform	OCHCO
10/10	Announce recognition strategy through SWAT Team and DHS Human Capital Leadership Council (HCLC)	OCHCO
4		
Submit OPM/OMB Deliverables		
06/10	Submit agency needs assessment to OPM on MAX	OCHCO
08/10	Submit Action Plan to OPM	OCHCO
09/10-10/10	Meet with OPM and OMB to review Action Plan and collaborate on objectives	OCHCO
10/10	Complete implementation checklist and post to MAX	OCHCO
12/10	Begin bi-annual meetings with OPM and OMB to assess progress of Hiring Reform	OCHCO

Focus Area 2: Assessments and Application Evaluation

In order to hire high quality candidates, DHS must streamline the application process and make it easier for applicants to understand. DHS will eliminate the use of essay-style questions upon initial application; eliminate requests for unnecessary documentation; standardize and improve assessment tools and job opportunity announcements (JOAs); use Category Rating; and notify applicants of their status throughout the hiring process.

1	Eliminate essay-style questions at initial application	
Barrier Addressed: Essay-style questions at the initial application are time-consuming and frustrating for applicants		
Project: Develop guidance to assist Components in the elimination of essay-style questions		
07/10	Develop DHS guidance on the elimination of essay-style questions	OCHCO
08/10	Post guidance on eliminating essay-style questions for Components to OCHCO website	OCHCO
11/10	Eliminate essay-style questions at initial application from all JOAs	Components
Measures	Total elimination of essay-style questions at the initial application across DHS; compliance checks through Human Resources Operations Audits (HROAs) and JOA spot checks	
2	Allow straightforward applications based on résumés and/or valid, reliable assessments	
Barrier Addressed: Requests for unnecessary documentation frustrate applicants and slow the evaluation process		
Project: Eliminate requests for unnecessary documentation		
09/10	Create and post DHS guidance on accepting supporting documentation to OCHCO website	OCHCO
11/10	Require that Components create and implement procedures on the acceptance of supporting documentation	Components
Measures	Quality reviews of developed Component procedures; reduction in unnecessary documentation requests; increased process consistency within Components; compliance checks through HROAs	
3	Move toward the use of “Category Rating” instead of “Rule of 3”	
Barrier Addressed: Traditional rating limits the pool of applicants from which managers can select		
Project: Implement use of category rating in all Components		
06/10	Identify need for Category Rating training across DHS	OCHCO
07/10	Review DHS Category Rating policy and take inventory of Component policies	OCHCO
07/10	Coordinate with OPM to assess DHS training needs, and schedule training sessions	OCHCO
09/10	Finalize and post update to DHS Category Rating Policy	OCHCO
09/10	Coordinate DHS train-the-trainer session with OPM to create Category Rating subject matter experts in each Component	OCHCO
09/10	Create and submit action plan to OCHCO for implementation of Category Rating (template to be provided)	Components
11/10	Begin the use of category rating in all Components	Components
01/11	Create guidance on how to use Category Rating in a strategic manner, including how to ensure the best qualified group contains quality applicants that meet hiring manager needs	OCHCO
01/11	Components begin reporting to OCHCO on use of Category Rating (reporting template to be provided)	Components
Measures	Submission of Component Category Rating implementation action plans; quarterly reporting to OCHCO on use of Category Rating; compliance checks through Delegated Examining audits	

4		Use USAJOBS to notify applicants about the status of their applications at key stages in the hiring process
Barrier Addressed: Limited and inconsistent communication concerning application status frustrates applicants		
Project: Create guidance and ensure compliance with DHS notification processes		
06/10	Survey Components concerning current notification processes	OCHCO
07/10	Coordinate with OCHCO Human Capital Business Systems to determine linkages between staffing systems and USAJOBS	OCHCO
09/10	Create and release DHS guidance on applicant notification procedures	OCHCO
11/10	Require that Components develop and implement procedures concerning applicant notification based on DHS guidance	Components
Measures	Quality reviews of developed Component procedures; standardization of DHS applicant notification procedures; reduction in applicant status inquiries; compliance checks through HROAs and JOA spot checks	

5		Long-term Innovation Strategies for Assessments and Application Evaluation
Barrier Addressed: Current assessments lack simplicity, validity, and reliability		
09/10	Explore need to create standardized assessment tools across DHS (decisions informed by release of OPM standardized assessments)	OCHCO/ Components
11/10	If appropriate, create assessment working group to identify MCOs and commonly filled occupations for assessment tool standardization	OCHCO/ Components
Barrier Addressed: Lengthy application process for entry-level positions frustrates applicants and managers		
02/11	Identify Component and target occupation for pilot of simplified assessment and/or résumé-only application process	OCHCO/ Components
06/11	Hold focus group with hiring managers and HR specialists to assess satisfaction with and success of pilot	OCHCO/ Components

Focus Area 3: Hiring Process Improvement

To improve the hiring process, DHS must identify and address barriers to fast, effective hiring as well as manager and applicant satisfaction. Components will select major barriers and develop corrective pilot projects to address them; successful pilots will be leveraged as best practices for use across multiple Components. In pursuit of data capable of informing additional improvement strategies, DHS will consistently analyze manager and applicant satisfaction data, and will explore methods for sourcing time-to-hire information in a more consistent manner. Other projects such as the standardizing of JOAs and position descriptions (PDs) will lead to additional reductions in hiring time and increases in satisfaction.

1	Analyze hiring process barriers and create solutions to improve quality	
Barrier Addressed: Each DHS Component struggles with specific aspects of the hiring process linked to the sourcing of quality applicants		
Project: Address specific process barriers through pilot improvement projects		
03/10	Survey Components to identify hiring process barriers	OCHCO
05/10	Develop and implement Component pilot projects	Components
07/10	Begin monitoring pilot successes and identify opportunities to scale innovations and best practices across DHS	OCHCO
Measures	Identification of best practices and opportunities for common process improvements across DHS; Component improvements in process speed and applicant quality	
Barrier Addressed: DHS lacks high-quality data concerning manager satisfaction with the hiring process		
Project: Market and redeploy the Management Satisfaction Survey (MSS)		
08/10	Create strategy for redeploying the MSS across DHS and increasing response rates	OCHCO/ SWAT Team
10/10	Redeploy MSS through memorandum or email from the CHCO	OCHCO/ Components
01/11	Continue monitoring MSS results and identify corrective actions when necessary	OCHCO/ Components
Measures	50% increase in response rates by 03/11; identification of corrective actions based on quarterly results	
Barrier Addressed: DHS lacks high-quality data concerning applicant satisfaction with the hiring process		
Project: Analyze the satisfaction of DHS job applicants		
10/10	Continue monitoring Applicant Satisfaction Survey results and identify corrective actions when necessary	OCHCO/ SWAT Team
03/11	Consider additional means of sourcing applicant satisfaction data based on the utility of Applicant Satisfaction Survey results	OCHCO
Measures	Increased understanding of barriers to applicant satisfaction; identification of corrective actions	
2	Measure the speed of hiring	
Barrier Addressed: DHS lacks high-quality data on the time-to-hire for all occupations		
Project: Create standardized methods of measuring time-to-hire and attempt to source more granular data from Components		
09/10	Coordinate with Component staffing system users to establish consistent, valid baseline data for time-to-hire across DHS	OCHCO/ Components
12/10	Components begin reporting any significant timeframe improvements to OCHCO for discussion and analysis	OCHCO/ Components
Measures	Increased insight into process timeframes and barriers across DHS; additional reductions in time-to-hire through identification of successful practices	

3	Reduce time-to-hire for mission critical and commonly filled positions
----------	---

Barrier Addressed: Creation of duplicative, non-standard PDs for MCOs and commonly filled positions slows the hiring process

Project: Create standardized PDs for use across DHS	
--	--

05/10	Identify MCOs and commonly filled positions across DHS to target with standardized PDs	OCHCO
05/10	Form Component working group through Classification Council to create standardized PDs	OCHCO
11/10	Release first set of standardized PDs for Component use	OCHCO
Measures	Reduction in time to classify positions; increased manager satisfaction	

Barrier Addressed: Creation of duplicative, non-standard JOAs for MCOs and commonly filled positions slows the hiring process

Project: Create standardized JOA templates and MCO announcement tips for use across DHS	
--	--

06/10	Form Component working group through Service Excellence Council (SEC) to create DHS-wide competitive and merit promotion JOA templates	OCHCO/SEC
10/10	Merit promotion and competitive JOA templates released	OCHCO/SEC
12/10	Create JOA toolkit with example job language for MCOs and commonly announced positions, plain language tips, etc.	OCHCO/SEC
Measures	Reduction in time-to-hire for targeted occupations; increased manager and applicant satisfaction; compliance checks through HROAs and JOA spot checks	

Barrier Addressed: JOAs across DHS are too lengthy and contain Federal jargon

Project: Create tools for JOA streamlining and set timeframe for improvement of all DHS JOAs	
---	--

05/10	Create DHS Streamlined JOA Checklist	OCHCO
06/10	Use DHS Checklist to streamline three JOAs, and create a plan to streamline all JOAs/institute streamlined templates	Components
12/10	All DHS JOAs must be streamlined	Components
01/11	Review 25 random JOAs per Component per week to ensure compliance with streamlining guidance	OCHCO

4	Long-term innovation strategies for hiring process improvement
----------	---

Barrier Addressed: DHS lacks high-quality data on the time-to-hire for all occupations

11/10	Explore opportunities to create a DHS-wide automated data collection system to measure time-to-hire	OCHCO/ HCBS
--------------	---	------------------------

Barrier Addressed: Components using the same automated staffing systems fail to share information and best practices

04/11	Explore ways to work with Components on the same automated staffing systems to standardize processes and share information JOA templates, assessment tools, and other information	OCHCO/ Components
--------------	---	------------------------------

Focus Area 4: Hiring Manager Involvement and Engagement

Hiring managers at DHS must be fully involved in the hiring process by engaging in workforce and succession planning, having meaningful conversations with human resources staff, and participating in all steps of recruiting and hiring. To ensure this level of involvement, OCHCO will create training on hiring manager roles and responsibilities, as well as hold managers accountable for hiring efforts through the performance management system.

1	Clarify hiring process roles and responsibilities for managers		
Barrier Addressed: DHS managers lack the training necessary to fully understand their roles and responsibilities related to hiring			
Project: Develop and deploy pilot training program for hiring managers concerning their roles and responsibilities in the hiring process			
08/10	Coordinate with OCHCO Learning and Development and Leadership Development to create hiring manager pilot training program		OCHCO
09/10	Identify organization to pilot training		OCHCO/ Components
11/10	Deploy pilot training, collect feedback, and assess success		OCHCO
01/11	Create plan for implementation of hiring manager training across DHS		OCHCO/ Components
Measures	Increased manager engagement in and understanding of the hiring process measured through the MSS; manager satisfaction with training program content		

2	Provide support for greater manager involvement in the hiring process		
Barrier Addressed: DHS managers lack the tools and assistance necessary to effectively support their involvement in the hiring process			
Project: Provide support tools for hiring managers and HR professionals			
09/10	Develop tools, fact sheets, and guides for the OCHCO website on topics including structured interviewing, job analysis, Category Rating, and the development of occupational questionnaires		OCHCO/ Components
09/10	Create tools to improve collaboration between HR specialists and hiring managers, including pre-recruitment meeting checklists, a service agreement template, and streamlined JOA guidance		OCHCO/ Components
Measures	Increased manager satisfaction and collaboration with HR specialists measured through the MSS		

3	Ensure managers are accountable for recruiting and hiring qualified candidates and supporting their transition		
Barrier Addressed: DHS lacks a consistent approach to ensuring that managers are highly involved in the recruitment, hiring, and on-boarding of new employees			
Project: Create performance goals related to hiring, recruiting, and retaining staff			
08/10	Determine phased implementation of performance goals to match different cycles and systems across DHS		OCHCO
09/10	New model performance language released to Components for integration into performance plans		OCHCO
10/10	Components on fiscal year performance cycle begin implementing performance language by 10/10; those on differing cycles implement at next review period		OCHCO/ Components
Measures	Full compliance with approved DHS performance language at appropriate cycle start; compliance checks through HROAs		

4	Long-term Innovation Strategies for Hiring Manager Involvement and Engagement		
Barrier Addressed: DHS managers lack the training necessary to fully understand their roles and responsibilities related to hiring			
12/10	Create guidance/training for HR professionals on consultative skills		OCHCO/ Components
2/11	Reconvene focus group with hiring managers		OCHCO/ Components
07/11	Build on content created through training pilot program and identify opportunities for permanent manager education on the hiring process (integration into new supervisory training courses, integration of e-learning into learning management systems across DHS, etc.)		OCHCO/ Components

Timeline of Hiring Reform Milestones

General Support Activities/OPM Deliverables	Assessments and Application Evaluation	Hiring Process Improvement	Hiring Manager Involvement and Engagement
03/10	(Complete) Survey Components on current state of hiring processes (OCHCO)		
05/10	(Complete) 5: Create DHS Streamlined JOA Checklist (OCHCO)		
06/10	(Complete) 1: Survey Components on current needs for assistance with Hiring Reform initiatives (OCHCO)		
06/10	(Complete) 1: Communication plan and barrier analysis (OCHCO)		
06/10	(Complete) 4: Submit Self-Assessment to OPM (OCHCO)		
06/10	(Complete) 3: Use DHS Checklist to streamline three mission-critical JOAs, and create a plan to streamline all JOAs/institute streamlined templates (Components)		
07/10	(Complete) 1: Monitor pilot successes (OCHCO)		
07/10	(Complete) 3: Coordinate with OPM to assess DHS Category Rating training needs, and schedule training sessions (OCHCO/Components)		
08/10	(Complete) 1: Create Hiring Reform materials to post on CHCO website (OCHCO)		
08/10	3: Create recognition/awards process (OCHCO)		
08/10	(Complete) 4: Action Plan due to OPM (OCHCO)		
08/10	(Complete) 1: Post guidance on eliminating essay-style questions to OCHCO website (OCHCO)		
08/10	(Complete) 1: Coordinate with Learning and Development/Leadership Development to create hiring manager pilot training program (OCHCO)		
09/10	3: Submit action plan to OCHCO for implementation of Category Rating (Components)		
09/10	4: Meet with OPM/OMB on Action Plan (OCHCO)		
09/10	2: Post guidance on accepting supporting documentation (OCHCO)		
09/10	3: Finalize and post update to Category Rating Policy (OCHCO)		
09/10	(Complete) 3: Coordinate DHS train-the-trainer session with OPM to create Category Rating subject matter experts in each Component (OCHCO)		
09/10	4: DHS guidance released on application notification procedures (OCHCO)		
09/10	5: Explore need to create standardized assessment tools across DHS (OCHCO)		
09/10	(Complete) 1: Identify organization to pilot hiring manager training (OCHCO)		
09/10	2: Create and post training and tools for HR specialists and hiring managers (OCHCO)		
09/10	3: Provide model performance management language (OCHCO)		
10/10	4: Complete OPM implementation checklist (OCHCO/SWAT)		
10/10	2: In-person Hiring Reform SWAT Team meeting (OCHCO/SWAT)		
10/10	1: Redeploy OPM MSS (Components)		
10/10	3: Upon release, begin using the DHS-wide JOA templates (Components)		
10/10	3: Merit promotion and delegated examining JOA templates completed (OCHCO/Components)		
11/10	1: Elimination of essay-style questions at initial application (Components)		
11/10	2: Component acceptance of supporting documentation policy/procedure in place (Components)		
11/10	3: Category Rating in use in all Components (Components)		
11/10	5: Create assessment tool working group, if needed (OCHCO/Components)		
11/10	3: Release first set of standardized PDs for Component use (OCHCO)		
11/10	1: Deploy manager training and collect and assess feedback on pilot (OCHCO)		
12/10	3: Create JOA toolkit with example job language for commonly announced positions, as well as plain language tips (OCHCO)		
12/10	2: Submit actions being taken to eliminate barriers and improve the speed of the process (Components)		
12/10	2: All JOAs must be streamlined (Components)		
01/11	2: In-person Hiring Reform SWAT Team meeting (OCHCO/SWAT)		
01/11	3: Components report to OCHCO on use of Category Rating (Components)		
01/11	1: Monitor progress of MSS and Applicant Satisfaction Survey (OCHCO)		