THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Committee Item
INFORMATION

- **Board of Directors**
  Organization, Personnel and Effectiveness (OPE)

9/15/2026 OPE Committee

6b

Subject

Report on Recruitment and Selection Process and Plan to Fill Vacant Positions.

Executive Summary

As of the date of writing this letter, there are 274 vacancies. This includes the 79 new Board-approved positions. The presentation associated with this Board letter provides a historical overview of the District's vacancy rates and the strategies in place to fill the vacant positions.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 6207: Positions Authorized.

Metropolitan Water District Operating Policy H-10 Recruitment and Selection.

Details and Background

Background

The Board recently approved 79 additional positions to begin addressing the District's core operational and strategic needs. These additional positions plus current vacancies brought total vacancies to 274. This report provides an overview of the plan to significantly reduce vacancies with a goal of near zero. The term 'near zero' is used since there will always be some level of vacancy throughout each year.

Metropolitan's historical practice was to maintain a 5 to 8 percent vacancy rate This was roughly 90 – 150 vacancies at any given time. The current goal of a near zero vacancy rate requires a new approach, which is outlined below.

To determine the changes needed, an in-depth analysis of the operational and process challenges was completed, resulting in clarity of the operational and procedural bottlenecks and a project plan of actions to taken to address the vacancy rate.

Lessons Learned and Key Strategic Changes:

For at least the past 15 years, the Recruitment Team was not staffed to attain a near zero vacancy rate.

Internal hires and transfers don't have an impact on the vacancy rate: on average, 45% of all recruitments result in an internal hire. While this is fantastic for internal employee development and the District, this doesn't impact the District's vacancy rate and must be factored into minimum staffing needs for Human Resources.

As a result of this operational understanding and historical analysis of current conditions, the District requires 1 Recruiter and .5 HR Assistant III for every 25 current or projected vacancies.

The Plan:

Based on the analysis, a plan was developed and implemented.

- In partnership with ACE, to address the historical vacancy rate, Human Resources hired limited-term Recruiters and Support Staff, known as the Surge Force.
- Stabilized full-time regular staff to meet future baseline recruiting needs. Additional positions will be needed as projections changes and additional District positions are authorized.
- Implemented benchmark timelines for each recruitment, providing a shared target between Recruitment and Hiring Managers, and ongoing insight into operational bottlenecks.
- Implemented an internal desk manual that standardizes Recruiter and Hiring Manager responsibilities in the recruitment process, which helps mitigate confusion and decreased the time to fill vacancies.
- Negotiated the ability to use eligibility lists, which significantly reduces the time to fill vacancies and is a more effective use of District resources.
- Implemented new eForm PCN verification process to completed before a manager submits a staffing requisition, which was critical to developing accurate time to fill metrics.
- Implemented a detailed requisition tracker that provides global visibility into current recruitment status and timelines.
- Modernized the pre-recruitment strategy planning sessions to improve the overall efficiency and accountability of the process.
- Established strategic recruitment priorities that directly impact vacancy rates.
- Clarified expectations and clear deadlines have led to greater accountability throughout the recruitment process.
- Monthly vacancy reporting to Group Managers and the Board in addition to monthly meetings with Groups as requested to strategize approaches to hard to fill positions.

Strategies to reach near zero continue to evolve based on lessons learned, customer feedback, and changing organizational needs.

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