

SWORN EXTERNAL SELECTION PROCESS

A.1 PURPOSE

This SEAM Article establishes the policy and procedures that govern the Cook County Sheriff's Office employment action and are a reiteration of standing practice, which prevents any political influence on this process.

A.2 POLICY

- (a) It is the policy of the Cook County Sheriff's Office to ensure that the merit-rank selection process for the position of correctional officer and other sworn merit-rank positions (e.g., lateral hiring) under this Article, will be based upon a department's operational and/or public safety needs.
- (b) The respective Executive Office Chief and/or department head involved in this Article's process shall complete and sign a No Political Consideration Certification (NPCC).

A.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

A.3.1 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Pursuant to State law, the Sheriff's Office may only hire into sworn merit-ranked positions those applicants that have been certified by the Merit Board to be hired into that position.
- (b) HR is responsible for:
 - 1. The continual posting and evaluation of applicants;
 - 2. Overseeing the hiring process of applicants;
 - 3. Providing notifications via email of procedure steps of the hiring process to the Director of Compliance; and
 - 4. Ensuring that if the number of positions available are not filled and/or attrition during the process creates additional open positions of the same job title, the hiring cycle may be repeated, as needed.
- (c) The Director of Compliance is responsible for, but is not limited to:

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1. Monitoring and auditing the hiring process on a periodic basis;
2. Providing recommendations for quality improvement related to employment practice deficits and opportunities;
3. Investigating and recommending discipline for any employee who is suspected or accused of violating this Article; and
4. Identifying conflicts of interest and implementing remedies.

A.4 SWORN EXTERNAL HIRING PROCEDURE

- (a) HR must request and receive approval through the Budget Office.
- (b) If approved (and in receipt of Merit Board files), HR shall facilitate the hiring process of qualified applicants.
- (c) Minimum qualifications and screening criteria standards for all sworn positions will be in compliance with all laws, statutes, mandates, Sheriff's Office policy/procedure, and best practices in law enforcement.
 1. HR shall ensure the minimum screening and hiring criteria standards are outlined.
 2. HR and the Sheriff's Legal Department may review screening and hiring criteria standards at least annually.

A.4.1 PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING

Upon receipt of the Merit Board Eligibility List, HR conducts or coordinates all further interviews, pre-employment testing, and background checks.

- (a) **Criminal History.** HR will request criminal background checks on all applicants to screen for criminal history which impacts their suitability for employment as a sworn officer. Applicants who fail to meet the hiring criteria will be disqualified.
- (b) **Polygraph Test.** Applicants will be given a polygraph test conducted and scored by a state-licensed polygraphist. The scope of the polygraph will be within the hiring criteria established by the Sheriff's Office.
- (c) **Physical Ability Test.** If more than six months have elapsed since the first physical ability test, a second physical ability test will be conducted and scored by the Sheriff's Office Training Academy. Each applicant is afforded two separate attempts to pass the test. Failure to pass after two attempts will result in the disqualification of the applicant.

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- (d) **Mental Health Screening.** Required for appointment into a law enforcement position.

A.4.2 INTERVIEW

Applicants who are deemed to have met the minimum qualifications for the position will be scheduled for a panel interview.

- (a) The panel will consist of:
1. Two employees from the hiring department who are familiar with the job duties and minimum qualifications;
 2. One licensed clinician who is a subject matter expert in behavioral health. The clinician may be an employee or contractor; and
 3. One representative from HR.
- (b) All panel members must have completed merit-based interview training and executed an NPCC prior to interviewing prospective applicants.
- (c) HR, in conjunction with the hiring department and an expert in behavioral health will develop a list of at least 10 questions. The questions will, at minimum, establish the applicant's:
1. Willingness and ability to do the job;
 2. Availability for work hours and willingness to work at the location where the job is located;
 3. Prior job performance;
 4. Knowledge and understanding of the position; and
 5. The extent to which the applicant matches the relative qualifications for the position.
- (d) All applicants will be asked to respond to each of the approved interview questions.
1. Additional follow-up questions by panel members are permitted, provided they are related to the determination of the applicant's suitability for the position.
 2. Each applicant is required to execute a NPCC which will be collected by the HR representative on the panel.
- (e) If a panelist has a conflict of interest with a particular applicant, they are required to disclose such conflict and will be excused from that interview and either a substitute

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panelist will be brought in, or the interview will be rescheduled.

- (f) Each interviewer shall independently complete an Interview Evaluation Form for each applicant.
 - 1. The interviewer shall indicate whether the applicant was “recommended” or “not recommended”.
 - 2. The interviewer will also indicate the reasons for their conclusions and sign the form.
 - 3. All forms must be completed in ink and no person may alter, add to or delete from the form other than the originator.

- (g) At the conclusion of all interviews for the day, the panel members will conduct a selection meeting. In discussing the applicant, panel members may:
 - 1. Discuss their respective position freely without fear of retaliation,
 - 2. Review notes and materials in the applicant's file; and
 - 3. Change their position on the applicant and amend their Interview Evaluation Form accordingly.

- (h) The Executive Director of HR will collect and review all interview evaluation forms.
 - 1. Applicants identified as “recommended” by all interviewers will be included on the list of recommended applicants.
 - 2. Applicants listed as “not recommended” by all interviewers will be disqualified from consideration.

- (i) If any non-consensus applicants remain, within 10 days following the last applicant interview, the Executive Director of HR, the respective department head, the Director of Compliance and all panel members will convene to discuss the applicant.
 - 1. The Executive Director of HR and the respective department head, upon reviewing all information, will decide whether to recommend or not recommend an applicant.
 - 2. If either HR or the respective department cannot reach consensus, the Director of Compliance will make the final determination.

A.4.3 FINAL RECOMMENDATION LIST

- (a) HR will compile a final list of all recommended applicants. A background investigation

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will be conducted to review all applicants' criminal history, work history and all documentation. Additional documentation, substantiation of compliance or other information may be required to be provided by the applicant or other parties. At the conclusion of the background investigation, all information and documentation will undergo a final review to determine the applicant's continued eligibility.

- (b) If there are more qualified applicants than available positions, the Executive Director of HR will make the determination of which qualified applicants will be selected to attend orientation. Qualified applicants with certification dates due to expire within six months will be given preference to avoid expiring certifications. Any applicant with current or previous honorable service in any branch of the United States Military may be given first preference.
- (c) Qualified applicants who are not selected to attend an orientation at the time they qualify will remain on the final list of recommended applicants.

A.4.4 HIRING

- (a) The Executive Director of HR must approve hiring the selected applicants before any offer can be made. Once approved, HR will extend a conditional offer of employment.
- (b) Conditional offers of employment include:
 - 1. The date of orientation and start date with the Training Academy;
 - 2. The applicant's submission to and passing a drug test prior to employment; and
 - 3. The applicant's submission to a physical exam and clearance by their personal physician.
- (c) Subject to changes to their initial eligibility, such as new or changed criminal background information, applicants selected to attend the Training Academy will be listed on a HR Personnel Memorandum.

A.4.5 DISQUALIFICATION OF APPLICANTS

- (a) HR will notify all applicants who are disqualified. The Executive Director of HR will advise the Director of Compliance of any disqualification of an applicant and document the reasons for the disqualification.
- (a) Applicants who are disqualified at any stage of the process prior to the creation of the Decision to Hire Memorandum may write a letter requesting reconsideration to the Executive Director of HR. The Executive Director of HR will:
 - 1. Convene a review panel consisting of representation from the Sheriff's Legal Department, the Executive Director of the Training Academy and the Director of

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Compliance to approve or deny the request; or

2. Send the applicant back to the Merit Board for reconsideration.
- (b) The Director of Compliance will maintain a list of all reconsidered applicants.

A.4.6 OFF-SITE HIRING

The Sheriff's Office will expedite the hiring processes for off-site hiring opportunities. When recruiting and hiring off-site, the Sheriff's Office will follow the procedures described in this section, however, any timeline or period described in this section may be condensed or adjusted.

A.5 LATERAL TRANSFER APPOINTMENTS OF CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

For purposes of this SEAM Article, a lateral transfer is defined as an applicant currently working for another agency or employer who:

- (a) Meets the standards of appointment as a Correctional Officer to the Cook County Department of Corrections, and all other eligibility requirements established by the Merit Board;
- (b) Completes the new-hire process as outlined in the section entitled Sworn External Hiring Procedure;
- (c) Possesses either of the following:
 1. All certifications and qualifications required by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB), having attended and successfully completed training in an Illinois Corrections Academy, and is currently certified by the State of Illinois to serve as a correctional officer; or
 2. Equivalent qualifications from another agency or state, which will qualify the individual to be granted a waiver from ILETSB to serve as a full-time correctional officer.
- (d) Has two years of full-time, continuous experience with the same law enforcement agency immediately preceding the date of application;
- (e) Is in good standing with their current employer as of the date of application as well as the date of Certification by the Merit Board; and

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(f) Is acceptable to the Merit Board.

Applicants will be required to complete the Personal History Questionnaire (PHQ), provide required documentation, and complete the background investigation and interview process prior to their applicant file being submitted to the Merit Board for review.

All applicants hired as lateral transfers will be hired to fill existing vacancies at the time of the transfer application.

A.5.1 PROBATIONARY PERIOD FOR LATERAL TRANSFERS

Applicants receiving an appointment as a lateral transfer to Correctional Officer must successfully complete a 15-month probationary period as a Correctional Officer during which time they are subject to discharge and termination by the Sheriff Office.

A.5.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR PROMOTION

To be eligible for examination for promotion, a correctional officer who was hired as a lateral transfer must have served/completed a minimum of one year of continuous service in the next immediate lower rank in the Cook County Department of Corrections at the time of the promotional examination.

A.6 CIVILIAN RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

Refer to SEAM Article EE – Civilian Recruitment and Selection Process for civilian recruitment and hiring procedures.