



---

---

## Wyoming Legislative Service Office

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A&I HRD Role in State Hiring

---

---

Program Evaluation Division

December 2006

### Purpose

In order to provide services and otherwise meet its responsibilities, Wyoming state government must have a hiring process that enables it to fill vacant positions with qualified employees in an effective manner. In July 2006, the Management Audit Committee directed staff to undertake a review of the executive branch hiring process. Although individual state agencies make the final hiring decisions, the Committee requested an analysis of the role of Department of Administration and Information (A&I), Human Resources Division (HRD), which is the state's central human resources agent. HRD has numerous statutory responsibilities to manage and oversee executive branch hiring processes.

### Background

Equality and merit are the foundation principles underlying most public employment situations. Wyoming statutes reflect the state's intent to operate as an equal employment opportunity employer, where the most qualified applicants are hired through a non-discriminatory process.

Wyoming state government has a hybrid hiring system in which HRD shares responsibility with state agencies. HRD's role is on the front end: posting vacancy announcements, receiving applications, and screening applications for minimum qualifications. The minimum-qualification review is what HRD provides to ensure that all qualified applicants have opportunities for state employment. Agencies make hiring decisions from among the qualified applicants that HRD forwards to them.

This was a slow, paper-based process for many years, but HRD significantly accelerated it in

2004 by developing an online system. Also because of this electronic conversion, the state receives and must process many more applications than before. The online system has made it possible for HRD to begin changing the process: soon, agencies will be reviewing all applications and choosing a smaller number for HRD to screen for minimum qualifications.

### Results in Brief

Although the statutes directing HRD's hiring role are 35 years old, they envision a contemporary human resources approach that we did not see being fully implemented. Despite the important electronic conversion, HRD performs its hiring-related roles in a transaction-oriented rather than strategic manner. With the state facing hiring pressures such as statewide low unemployment and potential large numbers of retirements from its ranks, we believe there are opportunities for HRD to improve its operations so the state can better attract suitable and qualified employees. Also, once the screening task has been reduced, HRD needs to determine how to deploy its resources to better meet the state's hiring challenges.

### Principal Findings

We found that HRD has focused primarily on the timely processing of applications, and has not developed active recruitment strategies to help agencies meet the challenges of hiring. Recruiting is passive and generally left to individual agencies. Vacancy announcements are not adequately tailored to either the positions or potential applicants, and the application process can confuse or even misinform applicants. HRD needs to enhance the hiring process to match what statute envisions and thereby better assist

agencies and applicants. To accomplish this, HRD should begin actively recruiting and should review its announcement, screening, and application processes to ensure they are designed to attract suitable and qualified employees.

Statute envisions, and A&I documents portray, an agency actively involved in achieving the state's personnel goals. We found that those documents overstate the actual impacts of HRD practices. The SRT section offers services and provides assistance upon agency request, but outside of a narrowly-defined scope of activity, it does little to shape or monitor the hiring process or its outcomes. As a result, using whatever in-house HR expertise they have, agencies have developed their own hiring practices for the estimated 2,088 supervisors and managers that hire employees. We recommend that HRD implement an audit of agency hiring practices, and develop a hiring procedures manual and specific training for state personnel involved in hiring.

In addition, we found SRT currently limits its use of a wealth of recruitment and selection generated data to describing workloads. It could also use the data to identify, analyze, and solve hiring-related problems. We recommend that SRT expand its view of and use of data to make it a part of a broader HR management information system.

### **Agency Comments**

HRD partially agrees with the Chapter 2 recommendation that it should begin actively recruiting and that it should review its announcement, screening, and application processes. HRD believes it is already working to become a strategic partner to the agencies and is close to implementing a consultative approach. HRD contends that agencies know they can shorten and simplify announcement language to target applicants, and suggests that agencies should contact SRT for assistance. HRD acknowledges that increased communication would help in addressing this and other issues.

HRD agrees with the Chapter 3 recommendations to develop and implement an audit of agency hiring practices, a procedures

manual, and specific HR training of state agency personnel involved in hiring. The SRT section is in the process of recruiting a workforce training coordinator to create training programs for all employees. However, HRD notes that it will be difficult to mandate supervisory training with its existing budget and training staff; also, as noted in the report, HRD lacks the authority to require agencies to spend funds on training programs.

Finally, HRD agrees with the Chapter 4 recommendation to expand its use of HR data. The SRT section plans to add reporting capability to its online system. However, it does not agree with the report's data analysis conclusions, and believes there are many contributing factors to whether or not particular positions attract applicants.

---

*Copies of the full report are available from the Wyoming Legislative Service Office. If you would like to receive the full report, please fill out the enclosed response card or phone 307-777-7881. The report is also available on the Wyoming Legislature's website at [legisweb.state.wy.us](http://legisweb.state.wy.us)*