DRAFT 9-29-23

Updated based on P & F ERR Subcommittee action on August 18 and September 22, 2023

Personnel and Finance Subcommittee on Equity, Recruitment, and Retention

Subcommittee members' final proposed recommendations to the Personnel and Finance Committee

(This update reflects various changes to the original draft proposed list of recommendations submitted by subcommittee members. It reflects subcommittee comments and priority selections in the Retention section of the draft at the 8/18/23 meeting, additional input by individual subcommittee members before 9/11/23, and results of instant voting on the remaining General Equity and Recruitment recommendations on 9/22/23)

NOTE: Shaded items below were subject to instant voting but did not get a majority vote for prioritization. They are not included in the final report recommendations but will be in the appendix with all original recommendations of the subcommittee.

BUDGET-RELATED PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS OF P & F ERR SUBCOMMITTEE
[Finalized per P & F ERR Subcommittee motion at its meeting on 9/22/23]

1) **Recruitment: Changes to Employee Relations Advertising and Associated Budget**
    a. Employee Relations must advertise on more platforms (i.e., LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.; Neogov and Indeed are not enough). Increase budget to advertise with UMOJA, Black Chamber of Commerce, and BIPOC Trade associations, e.g., National Association of Black Social Workers, Multicultural Student Centers, UW Odyssey Project, Local Black Fraternities and Sororities. Positions should be advertised in associations, e.g., Dane County is short on Social Workers and the Social Work position is not posted on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), but there are 20+ other positions in the Madison area. Employee Relations should consult with department heads and line staff about ideas for places or groups that would be relevant to advertise to.
    b. Employee Relations needs an advertising budget to ensure that postings are advertised appropriately so that it's not a burden on individual departments to budget for advertising positions.

VOTE: voice vote—AYE unanimous

2) **Recruitment: County Supported Apprenticeships, Internships, Training, and Mentoring Across All Skill Levels**
    a. Dane County should maintain and develop relationships with universities, technical colleges, and trade schools to recruit graduates. The county should have a presence at job fairs, and other employment-related events.
    b. Develop a summer apprenticeship work program focusing on entry-level positions like janitors. Maybe we could go through the Urban League, Boys and Girls Club, and similar organizations for a list of viable candidates and consider creating pipelines for positions that are often vacant (such as the one used by the Latino Academy of Workforce Development). This is already the process with certain positions, such as Badger Prairie CNAs, and it could be expanded after an evaluation of which positions are sitting open and unfilled for long periods of time. A program like this would be a positive start for young adults who are maybe not planning on attending

college at that point in their lives and at the same time create a positive talent pool for entry-level positions.

c. Allow ongoing open recruitment / alternative selection for hard-to-fill positions or positions that are frequently open and unfilled for long periods of time.
d. Expand funding for professional internships and temporary project assistant programs to support and assist the work of professional staff. Develop relationships with a variety of University and College programs (UW, MATC, UW-Milwaukee) to provide students with meaningful work experience that helps further the mission of the county department and allows senior staff an opportunity to mentor and work with younger workers.

VOTE: voice vote—AYE unanimous

3) Retention: Invest in and Implement an Evaluation System

There needs to be an evaluation system for all Dane County employees with opportunity for employees to evaluate their immediate supervisor and manager. This system should be comprehensive and inclusive, it should come from diverse polling, and would bring equity to the table. Currently no such system exists and creating one should ensure accountability and transparency via an ongoing process that allows for reviewing the results of evaluations, following up, and gauging implementation response and results. Employee evaluation has direct correlation to retention** (Example of a type of program that facilitates this: LATTICE program used by PHMDC.)

VOTE: voice vote—AYE unanimous

4) Elimination and Replacement of Position:

In Highway Department: Eliminate skilled labor training position and replace with skilled labor position (both F-14 positions currently)

(N**ote:** This was not a unanimous decision by the subcommittee. The roll call vote is reflected below. Maier voted no on the motion to forward these budget recommendations based on disagreeing with this 4th recommendation.)

ROLL CALL VOTE: Passed 4-3

AYEs=include in recommendations/ Nos=do not include in recommendations/

Weber: No

Maier: No

Gebrechristos: No

Hubbard Moyer: Aye

Wallace: Aye

Barak: Aye

Anderson: Aye

Absent from meeting and voting: Kigeya, Sze, Fay

EQUITY—GENERAL

1) Institute a Bias Awareness for Interview Panel Members per Tacoma Washington on the types of stereotypes and bias (Halo effect, Pitchfork effect, recency, like me, etc.) inherent in people and how to try to mitigate them. This can be a mini-training/refresher right before interviewing or reviewing questionnaires each time someone is scoring. [4 to 3 vote to prioritize]
2) Try to ensure the grading and interview panels are diverse. Interview panels should include at least one member from outside county government to reduce "groupthink." [6 to 1 vote to prioritize]
3) Interview process should include at least one Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion question from the sample options – see Port of Seattle for questions/process. [4 to 3 vote to prioritize]
4) Employee Relations must be staffed to attend job fairs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and other venues/events/conferences where BIPOC and LGBTQ+ candidates are most likely to be if equity and diversity are truly a priority. [4 to 3 vote to prioritize]
5) Continue a committee structure to work on equity in recruitment and retention. [no vote taken]

NOT PRIORITIZED:

- Create Affinity groups for Dane County employees. [Not a priority—2-5 vote]
- Develop cultural competency plan/training. [Not a priority—3-4 vote]

RECRUITMENT

1) **BUDGET: Changes to Employee Relations Advertising and Associated Budget (Included in Budget-Related Recommendations above)**
    a. Employee Relations must advertise on more platforms (i.e., LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.; Neogov and Indeed are not enough). Increase budget to advertise with UMOJA, Black Chamber of Commerce, and BIPOC Trade associations, e.g., National Association of Black Social Workers, Multicultural Student Centers, UW Odyssey Project, Local Black Fraternities and Sororities. Positions should be advertised in associations, e.g., Dane County is short on Social Workers and the Social Work position is not posted on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), but there are 20+ other positions in the Madison area. Employee Relations should consult with department heads and line staff about ideas for places or groups that would be relevant to advertise to.
    b. Employee Relations needs an advertising budget to ensure that postings are advertised appropriately so that it's not a burden on individual departments to budget for advertising positions. [4 to 3 vote to prioritize]

2) Address slow time-to-fill, which creates burden on the unit as the work doesn't go away. The risk of burnout increases as more work is added onto the plate. Publish average time-to-fill data on the intranet/internet on a regular basis [Assumes an internal evaluation is conducted and steps taken to decrease the time between application and interview / start date] [5 to 2 vote to prioritize]

3) Consider allowing line staff to grade applications or participate in interviews. This will reduce workload by increasing time to fill and help increase the sense of a team atmosphere. Further, line staff are most familiar with the work that needs to be done and the skillsets required. [4 to 3 vote to prioritize]

4) **BUDGET: County Supported Apprenticeships, Internships, Training, and Mentoring Across All Skill Levels (Included in Budget-Related Recommendations above)**
    a. Dane County should maintain and develop relationships with universities, technical colleges, and trade schools to recruit graduates. The county should have a presence at job fairs, and other employment-related events.
    b. Develop a summer apprenticeship work program focusing on entry-level positions like janitors. Maybe we could go through the Urban League, Boys and Girls Club, and similar organizations for a list of viable candidates and consider creating pipelines for positions that are often vacant (such as the one used by the Latino Academy of Workforce Development). This is already the process with certain positions, such as Badger Prairie CNAs, and it could be expanded after an evaluation of which positions are sitting open and unfilled for long periods of time. A program like this would be a positive start for young adults who are maybe not planning on attending college at that point in their lives and at the same time create a positive talent pool for entry-level positions.
    c. Allow ongoing open recruitment / alternative selection for hard-to-fill positions or positions that are frequently open and unfilled for long periods of time.
    d. Expand funding for professional internships and temporary project assistant programs to support and assist the work of professional staff. Develop relationships with a variety of University and College programs (UW, MATC, UW-Milwaukee) to provide students with meaningful work experience that helps further the mission of the county department and allows senior staff an opportunity to mentor and work with younger workers.

NOT PRIORITIZED

- Conduct an internal evaluation and take steps to decrease the time between application and interview / start date. My supervisor shared recently that he was reaching out to schedule interviews with applicants 120 days after they had first applied due to the lengthy multi-step process currently in effect. Many qualified and diverse applicants will find alternate opportunities and go elsewhere and it is important to develop a system where we can recruit desirable candidates before someone else does. It is not feasible for some candidates who are needing an income to wait many months to be hired. They may take an alternate position in the interim and end up staying there. There is also a heavy burden on staff who are working in understaffed departments who are at higher risk for burnout, job dissatisfaction and mental health issues. Slow time to fill positions also creates burden on the unit staff as they are expected to do more than their capacities as the work does not go away. The risk of burnout increases as more work is added onto the employee's plate. [Not a priority—3-4 vote]

- Determine/investigate whether Dane County Employee Relations Division appropriately staffed to do the work to be sure we have the best candidates? What is our HR to Employee Ratio? Industry standard for an organization our size is 1.03[1] per 100 FTE. The City of Madison reports 18 FTE with 2,764 permanent employees =0.65/100. [Not a priority—3-4 vote]

- Consider reducing the # of AHQ questions to reduce the burden to apply and grade applications [Not a priority—2-5 vote]

[1] https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/business-solutions/documents/organizational%20staff%20size.pdf

- Determine/investigate whether managers are properly trained on the hiring process. Do they have appropriate expertise if they are hiring irregularly? [Not a priority—1-6 vote]

- Quality and frequency of communications/updates with applicants while in the process is lacking and cold. Be sure templates are updated and demonstrate a warm touch. Both for applicants and for hiring managers. [Not a priority—2-5 vote]

- Audit of appropriate county clerical staff ratios. [Not a priority—2-5 vote]

RETENTION

1) **Recommend that the new Ombuds Committee should address the following topics in their work**:
    a. **HIGH PRIORITY:** Develop a separate mediation process for employees who are having challenges with supervisors. There needs to be a non-biased arbitrator available for all staff in this situation (unrelated to employee groups and sanctioned by DOA). There are current situations where staff are dealing with hostile and heavy handed managers who are not open to communication and who are not held accountable by their own managers. People don't trust the current mechanisms to deal with bullying, retaliation, and discrimination at the county. This situation is stacked against individual employees who feel powerless and without voice and end up leaving County employment. We need to hear people's voices through a **countywide climate survey** on an ongoing basis and also by offering opportunities for check-ins. We must practice trauma informed care, allow staff to pick a space and time that feels safe and comfortable for regular check-in (Quarterly or every 6 mo.) Ideally we should not wait until people leave their positions to find out what is going on, to see if there are patterns to pay attention to, and learn how we can support staff and keep them.
    b. **HIGH PRIORITY:** Focus on developing a transparent system for conducting, disseminating and acting upon the information provided in **exit interviews**. Again, it is essential for employees to feel safe and free to be candid during the process, and the involvement of a non-biased mediator would be optimal. Create a system where all employees who give notice are contacted and supported through the exit interview process. It needs to be clear what happens to this information after it is provided: How is the information / data provided used for the good? How does feedback get passed down to supervisors if necessary? How are changes that may impact retention made based on the information provided? Make sure **all** staff are aware of the exit interview process and who has access to the information gathered from employees. ER, employee group reps, supervisors should review the information gathered as this is best practice and brings accountability. Employee Relations should compile an annual report on exit interviews, identifying common themes and include recommendations for improvement. Publish retention data on the intranet/internet on a regular basis at the county, department, and division level. Depending on the size of the Department/Division, we need to look at retention by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Years of Employment, etc.

2) Publish retention data on the intranet/internet on a regular basis at the county, department, and division level. Depending on the size of the Department/Division, look at retention by

Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Years of Employment, etc. Address concern re: easily identifiable employees in smaller departments by aggregating data reported or otherwise maintaining anonymity.

3) **BUDGET: Invest in and Implement an Evaluation System (Included in Budget-Related Recommendations above)**
There needs to be an evaluation system for all Dane County employees with opportunity for employees to evaluate their immediate supervisor and manager. This system should be comprehensive and inclusive, it should come from diverse polling, and would bring equity to the table. Currently no such system exists and creating one should ensure accountability and transparency via an ongoing process that allows for reviewing the results of evaluations, following up, and gauging implementation response and results. Employee evaluation has direct correlation to retention** (Example of a type of program that facilitates this: LATTICE program used by PHMDC.)

NOT PRIORITIZED

- **EXIT INTERVIEW POLICY, PROCESS AND FOLLOW UP**
    a. Mandate that exit interviews (for all exiting employees, including those who leave due to termination) are sent out to every employee who leaves Dane County as part of the off-boarding process. These should be offered in writing (fillable pdf form), via Zoom, and/or in person and should be separate from any department-specific exit interview. Be sure that all employees are aware of the exit interview process and who has access to the information gathered from employees and actively encourage all employees to complete the exit interview.
    b. Staff (Employee Relations, employee group reps, supervisors) should review the information gathered in exit interviews as this is best practice and brings accountability.
    c. Employee Relations should compile an annual report on exit interviews, identifying common themes and patterns to address, and include recommendations for improvement.

- **SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEE ADVANCEMENT**
  Expand career ladders and pay for staff to receive necessary or desired degrees, certifications, and trainings so they can advance their careers. *Examples:* Social Service Specialist getting support for their MSW so they can be promoted to Social Worker; Sanitarian I, II, II, IT Specialist, Information Management Programming Specialist, Land and Water Resource Engineer, Enterprise IT Specialist, Systems Admin, etc. positions should have an entry (I) level, with automatic promotion to senior (II) level after a certain number of years on the job or on obtaining desired certification. Lead worker (III) level positions should be limited to internal recruitment, open to senior (II) staff with a certain number of years of experience and credentials.

- Proper onboarding - specifically for niche positions, allow for LTE/transition hours so that departing staff can help train the new staff. These positions often have little documentation/standards/cross-training, so the learning curve is very steep for new hires with support. The cost savings for holding some positions vacant is penny wise and pound foolish. Consider allowing overlap between retiring employees and newly hired replacements to help with transition and training.

- Require all managers to take continuing education and training about topics including Employee Benefits Handbook, personnel management, bias and discrimination, budgeting, and cooperative decision making.

- Make sure staff pick a space and time that feels safe and comfortable for regular check-in (Quarterly or every 6 mo.) Ideally we should not wait until people leave their positions to find out what is going on and we should learn ways on how we can support them and keep them, etc.

- There will need to be a uniform and consistent way of doing yearly performance evaluation across departments, divisions, and programs. Currently, there are no checks and balances as to when someone who is a regular employee can receive an evaluation. There are current employees within DCDHS who have been employed for years but only received 2-3 performance evaluation sporadically. **Employee evaluation has direct correlation to retention**

- Audit of reclassification/reallocation process.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS & IDEAS FROM SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS (NEEDING FOLLOW UP):

1) Is Dane County ER appropriately staffed to do the work to be sure we have the best candidates? What is our HR to Employee Ratio? Industry standard for an organization our size is 1.03[2] per 100 FTE. The City of Madison reports 18 FTE with 2,764 permanent employees =0.65/100.

2) What is our average Time to fill positions? Industry standard for an organization our size is 46 days. Highly qualified staff are also receiving offers from other employers and we may lose out on them if they accept offers elsewhere first.

3) Are managers properly trained on the hiring process? Do they have appropriate expertise if they are hiring irregularly?

4) How do we protect staff from retaliation? There should be a safe way to gather concerns and feedback from staff while they are still employed.

5) How do we identify income inequalities or pay disparities across Dane County and how do we plan on addressing them? Forming ways to do salary comparison/investigation and informing everyone involved should be the first step. We need to consider whether individuals receive back pay for work done underpaid.

6) Who makes decision about steps involving raises? For example, EG 1871 members have their last raise at 16 years, which means many will look for work somewhere else to earn a higher salary.

7) How do we best protect first responders and those who worked tirelessly during the pandemic by honoring their wishes? For example offering part-time positions, especially to nurses, as it has been suggested in multiple surveys of nursing staff elsewhere that part time employment is preferred for work/life balance and mental health.

8) **HIGH PRIORITY, 2024 BUDGET:** Can we audit reclassification/reallocation process?

9) **HIGH PRIORITY, 2024 BUDGET:** Can we audit appropriate county clerical staff ratios?

10) **MEDIUM PRIORITY, 2024 BUDGET:** Can we audit appropriate managerial staff ratios?

11) **LOWER PRIORITY, 2024 BUDGET:** Can we audit “double filling” process/practices?