



FILLING VACANT POSITIONS

Policy: POL-201-HR • Effective Date: May 1, 2022 • Res. # 085776

Cancels: Res # 084324 • Reference: None

This policy applies to all Whitman County employees, unless otherwise addressed in a bargaining unit contract.

Definitions:

Bona Fide Occupational Qualification - A legitimate, reasonable and proven reason to have job qualifications that would normally be illegal.

CSR – Civil Service Rules

Demotion – Movement from a position of higher classification salary range to a position of lower classification salary range.

Immediate Family - Members of an employee's immediate family include: spouse; child or step-child; parent or step-parent; sibling or step sibling; in-laws; niece or nephew; aunt or uncle; first cousin; grandchild, and grandparent of the employee. Immediate family also includes: relatives living in the employee's household; adopted and foster children living in the employee's home; domestic partner; any immediate family member of a domestic partner.

Job Announcement – A description of a position's duties, hazards, required skills, knowledge and abilities used for advertisement purposes.

Job Description – A description of a positions essential functions and primary responsibilities used to guide the employee and employer during the course of employment.

Job File – A file containing all documents related to the opening, advertising, and filling of a specific position. This file is maintained in accordance with state law.

Orientation – A meeting in which a new employee completes employment related paperwork and receives training on the organization's policies and procedures.

Probationary Period – An extension of the hiring process in which the employee demonstrates his/her applicable skills for a specific period of time.

Promotion – A change in job representing both an increase in wages and a change in job responsibilities.

Temporary Employment Pool – A pool of applicants applying for temporary positions. Applicants may apply at any time and applications are maintained for six months.

Transfer – A movement from one position to another within the same classification and/or salary range.

1. Vacant Positions shall be Filled by Department Heads and Elected Officials.

All vacancies shall be authorized and filled by the appropriate Department Head/Elected Official or his/her designee. The BOCC shall be notified of each vacancy for funding, documentation and/or approval purposes. For ease of processing, elected officials/department heads are asked to hire new employees on the first or sixteenth of the month.

2. Promotions, Demotions and Transfers may be used to fill a Position before Opening to the Public.

Vacancies may be filled by promotion, demotion or transfer. The individual selected must be classified as an employee before the time of hire.

3. Whitman County Subscribes to a Policy of Equal Opportunity.

Employees and applicants shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, veterans' status, marital status, age, the presence (real or perceived) of a disability or any other basis prohibited by local, state or federal law. Discrimination and/or harassment based on any of these factors shall not be tolerated.

Qualified individuals with disabilities may be entitled to an accommodation in the application process and/or in the workplace. Any qualified individual with a disability may request reasonable accommodation. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant/employee to request reasonable accommodation.

If a bona fide occupational qualification is required, Human Resources shall be consulted by the Department Head/Elected Official before the opening is posted. Human Resources and the Department Head/Elected Official shall work with legal counsel to create the appropriate documentation.

4. Job Descriptions and Announcements shall be Created in Cooperation with Human Resources.

Job descriptions and announcements are crucial to the definition and classification of all positions. Each open position must have an updated description and announcement before it may be posted for applicants. Department Heads/Elected Officials shall work with Human Resources to create/update descriptions and announcements. It shall be Human Resources responsibility to correctly classify each position.

Position Sharing – Departments preparing to share a position will create a description explaining what duties will be performed for each department and when. Additionally, an agreement will be written between the departments describing how the position will operate, how hours will be tracked and paid so that wages are paid in compliance with county, state and federal regulations. Shared position arrangements will be reviewed by the Auditor's Office and Human Resources to ensure compliance and logistical capabilities. A copy of the agreement will be kept in each department, the Human Resources Department and Auditor's Office.

5. Openings shall be Posted for a Minimum Number of Work Days.

Unless promoted, demoted or transferred within the same department, all regular job openings must be advertised for a minimum of one week to ensure open competition for the public. If a Department Head/Elected Official believes qualified county employees may be interested in a department other than their own, he/she may post the opening in-house before taking the position public.

Internal and public postings shall be arranged through Human Resources. All advertisements shall be reviewed by Human Resources before dissemination. Department Heads/Elected Officials shall determine where public ads are published. However, all ads shall be posted to the Whitman County web site, the Washington State Employment Security Department, and organizations required by the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Plan.

If a recently filled position becomes vacant within six (6) months from the offer date, the Department Head/Elected Official may screen for new candidates using the original applicant pool. The original applicant pool may not be re-used if any parameters of the position have changed. Parameters include, but are not limited to, job responsibilities, experience requirements, salary, benefits, etc. Unionized positions are still subject to their respective collective bargaining agreements. Re-use of an applicant pool shall only occur if it is not in violation of contract language.

6. A Whitman County Application is Required.

All applicants must complete the appropriate Whitman County application. Resumes and other material may be required at the discretion of the Department Head/Elected Official.

Submitted applications must be signed by the applicant and submitted in person, by mail, fax or email. All statements submitted on the application and/or resume are subject to investigation and verification prior to appointment. Any false or misleading information provided by the applicant may be grounds for rejection and/or discipline.

The County shall only accept applications for open positions.

7. Interviews shall be Conducted by the Hiring Department.

Interviews shall be conducted by the hiring department. If requested, Human Resources may assist with the preparation and implementation of the interview.

Interview questions and selection criteria must be job related and comply with all federal and state regulations.

8. Applicants may be Subject to Pre-Employment Tests and/or Questionnaires.

Tests and/or questionnaires may be utilized to measure each applicant's job related skill level. Such tests shall be administered by a person of like skill approved by the Department Head/Elected Official. Depending on the position, an applicant's employment may depend on successfully passing a medical examination, physical exam, drug test, or background check.

All tests, exams, questionnaires and background checks must be job related, objective and in compliance with state and federal regulations. Reference and background checks require a waiver from the applicant that may be included with the advertisement material upon the request of the department.

9. Employees shall be Subject to a Six Month Probationary Period.

All employees shall be subject to a six month probationary period starting from their first day of regular employment with Whitman County. An appointment shall not be considered to have full-time or part-time status for a period of six (6) months. The probationary period shall last no longer than an additional six (6) months if extended by the Department Head/Elected Official. If the probationary period is extended, a performance evaluation and written notice shall be given to the employee prior to the end of the original probationary period. A copy of the extension notice shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

The probationary period is an extension of the selection process and failure to successfully complete the period, as determined by the Department Head/Elected Official, does not carry with it any right of appeal. Employees in the probationary period may be terminated by the Department Head/Elected Official at will.

During the probationary period employees may not draw on annual leave benefits. Employees in their probationary period may draw on sick leave benefits after 90 calendar days. They will not be compensated for such benefits should they be terminated prior to completion of the probationary period. Employees promoted, demoted or transferred to new positions may carry their vacation, sick and compensatory accruals with them.

Completion of the probationary period should be documented via the employee successfully passing a performance evaluation. The employee shall then be considered as having satisfactorily demonstrated qualifications for the position.

10. All New and Rehired Employees must Attend an Orientation Session Through the Human Resources Department.

11. Temporary Positions may be Created to Assist with Department Responsibilities.

Appointments to county employment on other than a regular basis shall be considered temporary. Temporary positions may be filled via the advertising process described in this policy or through the Temporary Employment Pool maintained by the Human Resources Department.

The acceptance or refusal of temporary employment shall not affect an employee's eligibility for regular employment. The period of temporary service shall not be credited towards the completion of any probationary period. Temporary employees work at the discretion of the Department Head/Elected Official.

Temporary employees are not eligible for employment benefits except those required by law.

Successive temporary appointments to the same position shall not be made so as to circumvent the regular appointment of a qualified applicant.

12. Minors may be Employed in Accordance with State and Federal Law.

People between the ages of sixteen (16) and eighteen (18) may be considered for employment subject to state and federal regulations related to the employment and working conditions of minors. Minors must submit a legal document proving age at the time of application. Departments shall work with Human Resources to ensure working conditions of minors are within legal boundaries.

13. Employment of Relatives shall be Limited.

No immediate family members shall be employed in positions where a family member has the authority to: supervise, hire, remove or discipline; evaluate his/her work; or where family members are in direct competition with each other. Supervising and auditing will be liberally construed to include such functions as evaluations, signing pay sheets, emergency service dispatching, directing work assignments, and other activities of direct impact. When two employees would violate any of the above restrictions on hiring of relatives, they will be allowed to decide which one will leave their position.

Employees who become family after employment shall be treated in accordance with this policy.

Whitman County conducts open and competitive hiring processes. Preference will not be given to candidates who are dependents or relatives of current employees.

14. Previous Employees may be Re-hired at the Same Rate of Pay.

A regular county employee who terminates his/her employment with the County in good standing and returns to the same department in the same job classification within two years from the date of termination, may be compensated at the same pay range and step level as at the time of the termination. The former employee must submit a competitive application for the position and, if hired, shall be subject to a six month probationary period.

15. Civil Service Rules Apply to Specific Positions.

Civil Service Rules (CSR) apply to specific positions within the Sheriff's Office. Where this policy and the CSR conflict, the CSR shall prevail.

16. Seniority

Seniority is an employee's continuous length of service within the County from first date of hire. Seniority shall not apply to an employee until he/she has completed the required probationary period. The employee shall be credited with seniority from his/her most recent date of hire and first day of employment. Temporary employees have no seniority rights.

Seniority shall terminate effective the last day of employment or after eighteen consecutive months of temporary layoff.