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Agency of Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency and Department Heads

FROM: Beth Fastiggi, Commissioner, Department of Human Resources *B2*

DATE: July 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Hiring Freeze Update

On April 15, 2020, an immediate hiring freeze for all state positions was directed by the Commissioner of Finance and Management, as part of the [FY20 Supplemental Budget Adjustment Instructions](#). The hiring freeze applied to all positions then under recruitment and going forward.

The reason for the hiring freeze was the severe and sustained economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still a state of emergency in effect, the virus continues to linger, and our economy is only partially re-opened. The State faces a \$218 million General Fund revenue shortfall in FY21 and a \$125 million shortfall in FY22 based on best estimates. A consensus economic forecast is expected in August and will provide more clarity to the challenges ahead.

Effective July 1, 2020, the Legislature instituted a ‘nonessential position hiring freeze’ in Section A.2 (a)(1) of Act 120 of 2020, the FY21 first quarter budget. Of importance in the bill are the following:

- the freeze is in effect from July 1-September 30, 2020.
- the Secretary of Administration shall not authorize positions to be filled absent a determination that:
 - filling the position is critical for State operations; or
 - filling the position is critical for pandemic response.
- the Secretary of Administration is required to notify the Joint Fiscal Committee of any approved hiring during the freeze period.

The hiring freeze continues to apply to all classified, exempt, and temporary positions, regardless of the source of funding, unless a waiver is approved by the Secretary of Administration. When seeking a waiver of the hiring freeze, the request should clearly and concisely explain the duties associated with the position that supports a determination that the position is critical to State operations or the pandemic response. In addition to this justification, the waiver process will consider the immediacy of the need and whether the critical duties of the position can be reassigned or absorbed by other employees on either a temporary or permanent basis.

Request for Hiring Freeze Waiver

Please note, the attached form is an updated request form to be used effective immediately.

- Agency Secretary, or highest level of Appointing Authority, approves the request by signing the attached “Request for Hiring Approval” form.
- Request is submitted to DHR.HiringFreeze2020@vermont.gov.
- Request will be reviewed by the existing Position Pool Committee, which meets weekly.
- The Committee will either deny the request; ask for additional information or a consultation with the appointing authority; or forward to the Secretary of Administration for review and action.
- If approved, written authorization will be provided to proceed with recruitment.

The Secretary of Administration has determined that temporary positions requested through the SEOC (State Emergency Operations Command) are critical to State operations and the pandemic response, and therefore has granted an exception to the approval process for these positions.

Questions about the hiring freeze or the process should be directed to the Hiring Freeze email address, DHR.HiringFreeze2020@vermont.gov.

DHR is committed to working with you and your team within these limitations, to address your staffing needs. If you have any questions, your department’s [Talent Acquisition Specialist](#) or [HR Field Administrator](#) is available to assist you.