



PUBLIC FINANCE WORKFORCE | CASE STUDY

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

Expanding Applicant Pools and Enhancing Collaboration

➔ How the City of Los Angeles embraced innovative strategies to cut time to hire

Like local governments across North America, the City of Los Angeles faced familiar challenges in recruiting and retaining municipal staff. At times, vacancy rates were as high as 25% of its workforce. Through process mapping, innovation, and collaboration, City staff streamlined hiring—cutting time to hire for some positions by 33% and hiring nearly 2,000 more employees. Here is the story of how they did it.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

POPULATION: 3,849,000



Los Angeles is the most populous city in the State of California, and the second most populous city in the United States of America. Over 40 departments and bureaus support city leadership and manage the city's daily operations. In total, the City of Los Angeles employs more than 50,000 people.

GFOA spoke to Vincent Cordero, Cinthia Fletes and Howard Wada. Currently, Cordero works as the city's chief personnel analyst, supporting Workforce Development as well as L.A.'s Classification and Central Records divisions. Fletes works as a senior personnel analyst II within the city's Personnel department, focused on supporting L.A.'s Targeted Local Hire Program and Bridge to Jobs programs. Wada has been employed by Los Angeles for over two decades and currently serves as the city's personnel director.

THE SITUATION

Soaring staff vacancies, lackluster recruitment, and long hiring delays

With citywide staff vacancy rates at times reaching nearly 25%, staff knew they had to address their hiring crunch. While some positions like police officers have traditionally and consistently proven difficult to recruit, the city has also increasingly struggled to attract applicants for certain clerical, analyst, and specialized positions. At the same time, the city sought to diversify its workforce, particularly in positions that have historically been gender-dominated. Finally, at times, a lack of candidate responses to job offers held up the hiring process.



PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

- ? Expand applicant pools
- ? Cut time to hire
- ? Reduce vacancy rates
- ? Diversify workforce

RESULTS

- ✓ 2,000 new hires
- ✓ 33% reduction in time to hire

THE SOLUTION

Process mapping, new hiring programs, and community hiring events

To tackle the city's recruitment and retention problems, staff took time to map out the existing hiring processes. Chief Personnel Analyst Vincent Cordero stressed how important and valuable this step was, enabling staff to identify duplicative processes as they sought to streamline hiring.

City staff also invested in and introduced various alternative hiring pathways to the traditional civil service employment protocol. Among these new pathways are its new "Targeted Local Hire" (TLH) and Bridge to Jobs (BRIDGE) programs. TLH provides individuals a chance to be randomly selected for referral to city departments to participate in their hiring process and be considered for entry-level positions. If hired as a city employee through the program, candidates first participate

in a six-month, on-the-job training period. This is followed by a six-month probationary period. If and when the probationary period is satisfied, the candidate transitions to full-time regular civil service employment. Notably, TLH aims to serve vulnerable and underserved communities.

BRIDGE resulted from the successes of TLH, mirroring the initial program but expanding hiring target audiences to include semi-skilled classifications. In addition, where possible in accordance with the city's charter, some hiring exams have been replaced with on-the-job performance evaluations.

The final step in the strategy was to invest more time and resources in hiring events, with a particular focus on hosting community-based events that engage city residents where they are. This approach helped to lower some of the barriers in the application

process while simultaneously increasing the City's visibility in its neighborhoods.

THE RESULTS

Although city staff noted that "change is never easy," the benefits are clear. Most importantly, the city has reduced the time it takes to hire a candidate. Using a management analyst position as one example, Cordero noted reduction in hiring time by as much as 33% in some cases. The alternative hiring pathways—TLH and BRIDGE—have been immensely successful, resulting in the hiring of nearly 2,000 city employees as of July 2023. Together, these new approaches have expanded L.A.'s applicant pool, streamlined the hiring process, increased collaboration between departments, and fostered an environment that embraces innovation and positive change.

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Workforce 2023: Solving Hiring Challenges

GFOA has heard consistently from members about the difficulties of hiring in local government. In search of solutions, we identified eight municipalities across the country that have grown their applicant pools and reduced hiring times through process change. Their solutions are lessons to inspire other local governments to solve their hiring challenges.

Learn more: gfoa.org/workforce2023