



West Virginia Division of Personnel

ANNUAL REPORT
2024



Sheryl R. Webb, Director
John K. McHugh, Acting Cabinet Secretary

November 1, 2024

The Honorable Jim Justice, Governor
The Honorable Members of the West Virginia Legislature

Dear Friends of the Division of Personnel:

The Division of Personnel (DOP) continues to support agencies by providing resources in the areas of recruitment, training and development, and employee relations.

The DOP is committed to modernizing processes. We have provided specialized services for departments and agencies to assist in human resource challenges. We have continued to offer the best customer service possible while helping agencies navigate the current difficult times for recruitment and retention. It is our goal to provide the consultative services that agencies cannot find other places to better serve the employees of this State.

It is my pleasure to share with you the achievements of the West Virginia Division of Personnel for Fiscal Year 2024, in accordance with West Virginia Code § 29-6-7(b) (11).

I welcome your inquiries regarding any of the material contained herein.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheryl R. Webb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

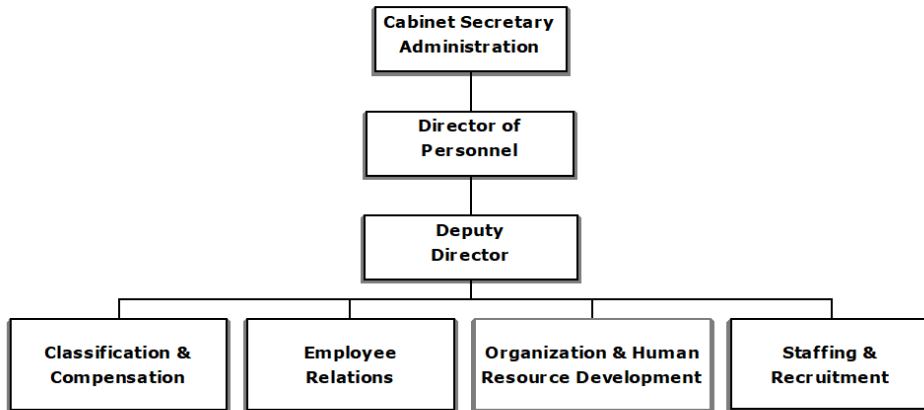
Sheryl R. Webb
Director

c: John McHugh, Acting Cabinet Secretary, Department of Administration
State Personnel Board

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ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DIVISION OF PERSONNEL OVERVIEW

- Supports human capital needs of West Virginia state agencies through an integrated system for recruiting, screening, and referring applicants for employment ensuring that personnel standards and policies are met.
- Establishes and maintains classification and compensation plans.
- Ensures compliance with personnel standards and policies for employee personnel transactions.
- Formulates and consistently interprets personnel policies and procedures.
- Provides assistance pertaining to grievance and disciplinary matters.
- Facilitates organizational and human resource development and training.

MISSION

The mission of the Division of Personnel (DOP) is to provide personnel management processes and systems to support state agencies in employing and retaining individuals of the highest ability and integrity, who can provide optimal governmental services for the citizens of West Virginia. Key to this mission is providing resources that promote trust and confidence in the DOP's services while advocating and advancing personal/professional growth for all state employees.

INTRODUCTION

The DOP was created by the Legislature in West Virginia Code §29-6-1 *et seq.* in 1989 to provide leadership in personnel management for state government. The DOP services touch all aspects of employment from application and hiring through separation or retirement.

The goal of the DOP is to ensure that state government is staffed by a diverse workforce of skilled and dedicated individuals, responsive to the needs of the citizens of West Virginia. The use of proven personnel management techniques, based on merit principles and scientific methods, provides state agencies with qualified job applicants and an infrastructure that promotes equal employment opportunity and fair treatment of employees in all aspects of personnel administration.

A comprehensive system of personnel management is achieved through the integration of six functional areas. An overview of the responsibilities and major accomplishments for each section of the DOP is summarized in this report.

The DOP serves as liaison and coordinator for the State Personnel Board. The five-member Board, appointed by the Governor and chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Administration, meets monthly. Meetings are held at the West Virginia State Capitol complex in Building 3, Suite 500. The DOP coordinates regular and emergency rule-making processes and sets the agenda for meetings based on items requiring Board approval such as: creation or amendment of policies, amendments and updates to legislative rules and statute, requests for reductions-in-force, requests for approvals of secondary employment, and pay plan issues as well as similar items for affiliated county health departments.

To encourage information exchange, the DOP holds a quarterly meeting of the Human Resource Advisory Committee (HRAC) for human resources employees in the Executive Branch and affiliated county health departments. The meeting is held in March, June, September, and December virtually. This meeting serves as a platform for interaction and exchange between DOP leaders, DOP-covered state agency human resources staff, and representatives from wvOASIS and the Budget Office. Though not covered by the DOP merit system, many human resources employees from non-covered agencies also choose to attend the meetings to stay current on human resources trends and best practices. In addition, the DOP submits new or amended policies and class specifications to HRAC for review prior to issuance.

A wealth of employee and supervisory information is also provided through the DOP website. Visitors to the DOP site, www.personnel.wv.gov, can find information specific to each DOP section, sample documents for supervisors; training tools; DOP law, rule, policies, and interpretive bulletins; frequently asked questions; an announcement page for informational articles and many other resources for personnel administration and employee/applicant assistance. The State Personnel Board minutes, meeting schedule and meeting agenda can also be found on the website.

BUDGET

DOP Budget History				
FY	Personal Services + Annual Increment	Benefits	Unclassified	Total
2019	\$ 3,424,728	\$ 1,017,862	\$ 1,399,231	\$ 5,841,821
2020	\$ 3,677,028	\$ 1,083,655	\$ 1,399,231	\$ 6,159,914
2021	\$ 3,677,028	\$ 1,083,655	\$ 1,399,231	\$ 6,159,914
2022	\$ 3,515,053	\$ 758,541	\$ 743,683	\$ 4,017,276
2023	\$ 2,492,076	\$ 703,040	\$ 1,659,128	\$ 4,854,244
2024	\$ 2,428,875	\$ 746,826	\$ 666,632	\$ 3,842,333

The DOP’s budget consists of special revenue funds with revenue generated by fees for performing services for agencies that have classified and classified-exempt employees. As a special revenue agency, DOP lost revenue each time the legislature authorized agencies to create their own merit systems. An interdepartmental transfer of funds from the General Services Division was provided to support the agency as a result.

ADMINISTRATION

OVERVIEW and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Administration section coordinates the financial, purchasing, human resources, information technology and communications functions of the DOP. This section also serves as advisor to the Director, providing DOP generalist knowledge, workforce analytics, project management, and input into key functions within the DOP. In addition, the Director's Office manages the communication, scheduling, and recordkeeping functions of the State Personnel Board.

The DOP continues to support the wvOASIS system development by providing training, posting wvOASIS information on its website, and assimilating DOP policies and procedures into the design of the system and maintaining strong communication between DOP and the wvOASIS teams. DOP continues to have regular meetings with wvOASIS representatives to resolve issues and find efficiencies in processes.

Additionally, the Administration section maintains the DOP website and performs research, writing, editing, design, and distribution of important news and information.

Key initiatives initiated or continued during FY 2024, as more fully described below, include:

- The DOP continues to improve customer outcomes and experiences through the offering of enhanced responsiveness, problem solving, coordination, and collaboration with agencies, and the provision of expanded executive coaching and consultation services to support agencies' major change efforts.
- The DOP merged the Staffing Services and Personnel Transaction Sections to create the Staffing and Recruitment section. This change allows for a reduction of an Assistant Director position through attrition and provides an opportunity to expand services.
- The Staffing and Recruitment section has placed a notable emphasis on recruitment for all state positions and has also improved the process for how the DOP works with agencies to promote critical needs positions.
- Continued to improve the capacity and effectiveness of internal operations through training and coaching of DOP staff, process improvement efforts, leadership and managerial development, and enhanced performance management, communication, and conflict management systems and practices. More specifically, the DOP has placed a focus on targeted agency training and consulting to assist with issues or to provide training on human resources trends.
- The DOP won the 2024 Advancing Human Resources Profession award at the National Association of State Personnel Executive Summer Conference for the Managing for Excellence Certification Program.

CLASSIFICATION and COMPENSATION

OVERVIEW

The Classification and Compensation (Class and Comp) section is responsible for the development, maintenance, and revision of the classification and compensation plans for positions covered under the DOP merit system. The classification and compensation plans establish job classifications and a pay structure to ensure that the same title, qualifications, and compensation range are applied equitably across state government. This section is also responsible for updating the Pay Plan Policy and ensuring that discretionary pay differentials comport with the policy requirements.

Class and Comp staff reviews personnel transactions and agency staffing requests for compliance with state classification and compensation law, rule, and policies. The section works cooperatively with user agencies in the development of new and revision of existing job class specifications based on new programs, reorganizations, and new technology in the workplace. Staff also assists user agencies in responding to recruitment and retention problems and other compensation related issues. This section also conducts and participates in a variety of salary surveys on a national, regional, and local basis. In FY 2024, the section made contributions to a major national survey and a variety of state and regional surveys, for a total of 40 salary surveys.

Class and Comp works in cooperation with the Attorney General's Office to represent the DOP at grievances filed by employees. Occasionally, agencies call upon the Class and Comp section to explain regulatory interpretations at Level 1 grievances. In FY2024, staff attended 21 Level 2 grievance mediations and 5 Level 3 grievance hearings. During mediations, the Class and Comp representative provides information regarding the rationale for classification or compensation determinations. In a Level 3 hearing, testimony is provided regarding the classification determination as well as the classification and compensation plans, law, rule, and policy governing these determinations.

FY 2024 ACTIVITIES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This section processed 4,198 wvOASIS electronic transactions. In addition, Class and Comp evaluated 1,241 Position Description Forms (PDF), reviewed/processed 4,437 job posting request forms for job vacancy postings, reviewed 71 classification appeals, and conducted 37 on-site and virtual job audits.

In this fiscal year, the section presented 56 proposals for classification and compensation plan revisions to the State Personnel Board including creating and/or revising a total of 39 class specifications. This section has also provided postings training statewide.

In FY 2024, this section reviewed 254 requests for discretionary pay differentials authorized under the DOP Pay Plan Policy. Of the 254 requests, 8 were withdrawn or returned, 12 were denied, and 234 were approved, representing a 95.12% approval rate.

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EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

OVERVIEW

Designed to establish and enable the execution of Government-wide human resources law, rule, policy, and programs, Employee Relations (ER) works broadly with all levels of government and is uniquely positioned to promote awareness, education, and compliance on policies and initiatives that impact agencies, workers, and their families.

Serving as a trusted resource for professional human resources consultation, ER provides technical and comprehensive guidance to West Virginia State agencies and employees regarding the full range of human resources management policies and practices. These include federal and state employment-related laws and regulations, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), West Virginia Wage Payment and Collection Act, federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as well as the DOP's statute and legislative rules, personnel policies, disciplinary actions, and grievances.

FY 2024 ACTIVITIES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ER provided 1,126 individual consultation services to employees and State agencies regarding a variety of human resources policies and practices, including a review of 36 agency-specific policies, procedural guidance documents, and correspondence.

In addition to providing individualized consultation, ER authors a variety of human resources guidance documents made available to State agencies and employees through the DOP website and guidance during quarterly meetings of the Human Resources Advisory Committee. ER published 14 guides, job aids, sample policies, and documents during the fiscal year.

To ensure a clear and uniform understanding and administration of human resources law, rule, and policy, ER conducted four (4) training sessions covering a range of personnel management topics including privacy, workplace harassment, progressive corrective and disciplinary action, and leave entitlements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ER also developed an online training course on the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The DOP actively seeks input from agencies and employees in the development of personnel policies and legislative rules. Agencies and employees are encouraged to participate in the development of policies and rules by attending public hearings, calling to share concerns and suggestions, or providing written comments.

EMPLOYMENT SUITABILITY

The DOP Administrative Rule provides that employees previously dismissed from any public service for delinquency, misconduct, or other similar cause may be disqualified from future employment. The ER section meets regularly to determine the re-employment suitability of individuals dismissed from employment in the DOP state-classified service and, in limited situations, public service in general. When making such a decision, ER considers the work-related offense resulting in dismissal and the

circumstances surrounding the separation. Individuals determined to be ineligible for re-employment are notified in writing and provided the procedures to appeal the decision.

In FY 2024, 315 dismissals were reviewed. Based on the agency-stated reason for dismissal, 247 former employees were notified they were ineligible for re-employment in the classified service due to the nature of their misconduct and subsequent dismissal from public service. Eight (8) individuals exercised their right to appeal the eligibility determination, resulting in the DOP Director amending or reversing two (2) disqualification decisions.

The ER section is also authorized by the West Virginia State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to obtain applicant criminal history record information to make suitability determinations for employment in the classified service. At the request of the classified state agency and affiliated health departments, ER arranges for the applicant to be fingerprinted to secure State and federal criminal records. Prohibited from discussing criminal history record information with the agencies, ER makes the determination of suitability for employment based upon the specific job functions and disqualifying offenses submitted by the agency. ER provided State agencies with suitability determinations for 84 applicants in FY 2024.

The ER section also provides specialized grievance counseling to both employees and employers regarding all aspects of the grievance procedure. ER provides procedural guidance, which includes time frames for each step of the process, notification requirements, burden of proof, and providing information about decisions made on similar cases. During FY 2024, ER staff reviewed 1,066 grievances and responded to 37 grievance-related inquiries from employers and employees.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT PROCESS

Unless otherwise exempted by statute, covered agencies desiring to enter into a settlement agreement and release with a current or former classified employee may only do so after the review and certification by the DOP. This process ensures the terms of the settlement agreement comply with DOP law, rule, and policy, or other state or federal law and is pursuant to the DOP Administrative Rule, W. Va. Code R. §143-1-21.1, and the DOP *Settlement Agreements/Back Wages* policy (DOP-P24).

The ER section provided technical assistance on 453 settlement agreements and payroll correction requests. At the request of DOP-covered agencies, ER completed reviews on 249 settlement agreements and Payroll Correction Payment Request Forms (PAYC) in FY 2024. Of those reviewed, the Director certified 59 settlement agreements and 147 PAYC requests. A total of \$615,549 in back wages, \$499 interest, and \$30,766 in lump-sum payments were certified by the Director.

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ORGANIZATION and HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The Organization and Human Resource Development (OHRD) section currently consists of five (5) staff members including one Assistant Director, one Senior Training and Development Consultant, one Training and Development Consultant 1, one Staff Development Specialist, and one Administrative Services Assistant 1. There is one vacant position in the process of being filled. It receives additional support from one Manager, one Help Desk Analyst 1 and one Content and Media Design Specialist, who are assigned to the Director's Office.

OHRD provides training programs, development strategies, and consulting services to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of State government. OHRD's mission is to facilitate learning; guide visionary change efforts; and improve individual, team, and organizational performance. OHRD maintains a yearly schedule of interactive classroom, virtual, and online training; arranges special training, coaching, and consulting services upon request; administers the *Supervisor/Manager Training Program* policy (DOP-P18); administers the new NEOGOV Perform Program; and directs the activities of the Center for Quality Government.

OHRD's goal is to foster higher competency in critical managerial functions, ensure that public funds are expended judiciously, and public services are provided in an effective and efficient manner. It is imperative that State government supervisors and managers are able to competently organize, direct, monitor, and evaluate the personnel and programs for which they are responsible. The DOP offers courses to ensure that all supervisors and managers in affiliated agencies possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully carry out the duties and responsibilities of their positions.

The Center for Quality Government was established in 1993 to provide a comprehensive management development curriculum for all State government administrators. The Center focuses on strategies and skills that will enable managers and supervisors to provide responsive services to the citizens of West Virginia; effectively manage financial and human resources; and promote high ethical standards. The Center's principal components are the Supervising for Success series, the DOP Managing for Excellence Certification Program, and DOP Trainer Certification Program.

FY 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OHRD successfully completed the second offering of the *Managing for Excellence* (MFE) certification program beginning in May 2023 with 23 graduates. The MFE program is a series of three, three-day trainings, online coaching, and a management change case, all of which together span approximately one year. The certification was designed to provide a rigorous leadership program geared toward current or aspiring middle managers. In FY2024, the second and third three-day sessions as well as 238 hours of participant coaching were completed. In June of 2024, OHRD was honored to receive the ***Advancing the HR Profession Award*** from the **National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE)** for the MFE program.

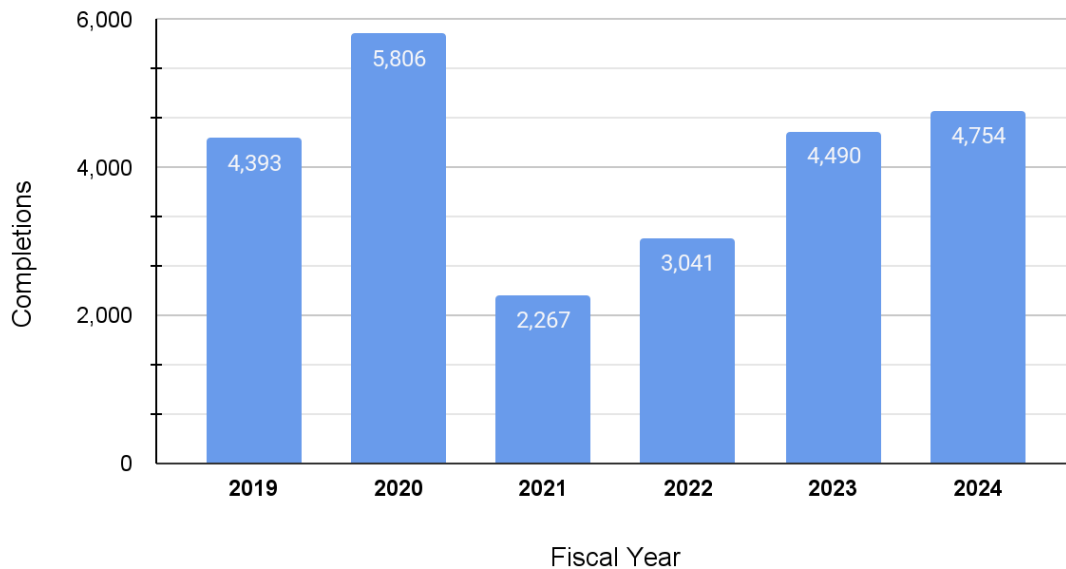
The *Trainer Certification* program was offered for the 4th time in February 2024. This certification program helps trainers in DOP-covered agencies enhance their agency's training events, making them more engaging and effective for their learners. This certification spans approximately a year, including training sessions on face-to-face presentations, an online training, reading assignments, and culminating in a final comprehensive exam. In FY 2024, OHRD completed two training sessions and began the e-learning component of the certification.

OHRD's GENERAL STATISTICS and ACTIVITIES

The OHRD section continued its commitment to offering programs based on the training and development needs of the State workforce.

In FY 2024, OHRD conducted 41 face-to-face classes resulting in 956 completions, 49 virtual classes resulting in 1,254 completions, and administered 16 standalone, fully online classes resulting in 2,544 completions. The live training sessions resulted in 581.5 hours of training and a total of 4,754 graduates.

Participant Completions - by FY



The following courses were offered in support of the *DOP's Supervisor/Manager Training Program* policy (DOP-P18):

- *Supervising for Success I: Critical Skills for Supervisors (f2f and virtual)*
- *Preventing Harassment: A Shared Responsibility (online)*
- *The Drug-Free Workplace (online)*
- *Employee Performance Appraisal: The Foundation for Performance Management (online)*
- *Discipline and Documentation (virtual)*
- *Managing and the Law (online)*
- *Workplace Safety: Your Responsibility (online)*
- *Attendance Management (online)*
- *Conflict Management (f2f)*
- *Navigating Difficult Conversations (f2f and virtual)*
- *Coaching and Developing Employee Performance (f2f)*
- *Let Go and Stay Close: Skills and Techniques for Successful Delegation (f2f and virtual)*
- *Leading Change in Turbulent Times: Improving Your Team's Adaptability and Performance (f2f)*

A total of 2,674 employees completed these programs in Fiscal Year 2024.

The DOP offered 28 additional training programs including:

- *Avoiding Burnout: Strategies for Managers to Create Better Work Culture (virtual)*
- *Conducting Selection Interviewing Remotely (virtual)*
- *Digital Communication: Better Emails and IMs (virtual)*
- *Heading into Retirement Webinar Series (virtual)*
- *How to Improve 1-1 Performance Conversations (virtual)*
- *How to Write Measurable Performance Expectations (virtual)*
- *Interpersonal Communication: Building Relationships, Improving Performance (virtual)*
- *Know Your State Government (f2f)*
- *Managing a Distributed Workforce: Skills and Strategies (virtual)*
- *New Employee Orientation: Welcome to WV State Government (online)*
- *Onboarding Employees: It's More Important Now Than Ever (virtual)*
- *Providing Exceptional Customer Service (online)*
- *The Resilience Factor: How to Build Resilience in Challenging Times (virtual)*
- *Running Effective Meetings (f2f)*
- *Supervising for Success II: Leadership Essentials (f2f)*
- *Time Management (virtual)*
- *Webquest-Effective Meetings Using Agendas and Minutes (online)*
- *Writing for Results - Grammar and Punctuation (online)*
- EPA CLASSES:
 - *NEOGOV Perform Training for Employees (online)*
 - *A Manager's Guide to EPA-1 (online)*
 - *A Manager's Guide to EPA-2 (online)*
 - *A Manager's Guide to EPA-3 (online)*
 - *Mandatory Training on 2024 Revisions to the Employee Performance Appraisal Policy (DOP-17) (online)*
- CERTIFICATION CLASSES:
 - *Managing for Excellence II: Power, Politics, and Persuasion (f2f)*
 - *Managing for Excellence III: The Power of Co-Created Change (f2f)*
 - *Introduction to Adult Learning: Enhancing Performance Through Active Training (f2f)*
 - *Train the Trainer: Developing Learning Leaders (f2f)*
 - *Train the Trainer: E-Learning Edition (online)*

A total of 2,080 employees completed these programs in Fiscal Year 2024.

OHRD staff also offered the Cohort Program for two groups during FY 2024. The Cohort Program is an accelerated compliance initiative under the *Supervisor/Manager Training Program Policy* (DOP-P18). This program enables supervisors and managers to complete Components I-III, along with the first year of the 12-hour Component IV Continuing Education Requirement outlined in DOP-P18, all within a single year.

In FY 2024, OHRD continued to offer assistance with Special Requests, which include customized training programs and performance consulting services to meet a team's or organization's needs to address emerging performance gaps and/or opportunities for improvement. This year, OHRD completed six training sessions, for 198 participants, on topics including leadership, burnout, team building, and interpersonal communication, for agencies at Workforce WV, Department of Rehabilitative Services, and the State Treasurer's Office. OHRD also completed the Cabinet Secretary's request for the Department of Administration (DOA) Training Initiative, ensuring that all DOA managers become P-18 compliant within a two-year period.

Employee Performance Appraisal (EPA) Administration

The OHRD section continues to provide administrative support for the online performance appraisal system for all DOP-covered employees. During the course of FY 2024, OHRD worked with nine (9) departments to maintain and manage approximately 13,000 active users in the system.

OHRD's system administration and maintenance efforts in FY 2024 included the following:

- **User Management:**
 - Maintained and managed user accounts, ensuring accurate and timely updates for employee status changes, department transfers, and new hires.
 - Coordinated with departmental HR representatives to ensure user roles and permissions were appropriately assigned and updated.
- **System Configuration and Customization:**
 - Implemented custom configurations to align the system with organizational policies and procedures.
 - Adjusted system settings to support specific departmental needs and streamlined workflows for performance appraisals.
- **Data Integrity and Security:**
 - Conducted regular audits to ensure data accuracy and integrity within the performance appraisal system.
- **Policy and Process Revisions:**
 - In FY 2024, OHRD worked with ER to revise the EPA policy and process based on system improvements and user feedback.
 - Updated and refined support materials to reflect the latest processes and procedures, ensuring that all users had access to accurate and current information.

- **Training and Support:**
 - Rolled out a comprehensive policy update training entitled "Mandatory Training on 2024 Revisions to the Employee Performance Appraisal Policy (DOP-17)" to 12,630 users, with a completion rate of 10,924 users.
 - Provided ongoing technical support for NEOGOV system users, addressing technical issues, and resolving user queries efficiently.
 - Conducted bimonthly meetings with HR users to discuss system maintenance, gather feedback, and identify areas for improvement.

- **System Enhancements and Upgrades:**
 - Collaborated with the NEOGOV vendor to implement system enhancements and upgrades, ensuring that the performance appraisal system remained current with technological advancements and user needs.
 - Tested new features and functionalities before deployment to ensure they met organizational requirements and did not disrupt existing processes.

- **Reporting and Analytics:**
 - Generated regular reports to track system usage, training completion rates, and performance appraisal metrics.
 - Utilized analytics to identify trends and areas for improvement within the performance evaluation process, providing insights to HR and organizational leadership.

Through these efforts, OHRD ensured the performance appraisal system operated smoothly and effectively, supporting the evaluation and development of DOP-covered employees. The proactive management and continuous improvement of the system have contributed to a more streamlined and efficient performance appraisal process across the organization.

STAFFING & RECRUITMENT

OVERVIEW

The Personnel Transaction Review section and the Staffing Services section merged in January 2024. The combined section is now called Staffing & Recruitment (S&R). A thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of both sections resulted in merging the sections to enhance efficiency and collaboration. This strategic restructuring optimizes the DOP's resources by highlighting complementary functions, leading to better outcomes for the agencies the DOP serves.

This section establishes and maintains employee information systems and historical records for all DOP merit system covered state employees and affiliated county health departments. The section certifies personnel transactions and ensures that all transactions are in compliance with applicable state statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, and compensation plans.

Back pay awards may be granted to employees as a result of a grievance decision, court order, settlement agreement, or an order from the United States Department of Labor. The DOP assists state agencies in processing back pay awards to ensure compliance with existing statutes and legislative rules. S&R is responsible for verifying calculations of the monetary awards and compensation changes, as well as calculating interest.

This section also presents proposals to the State Personnel Board for layoff or when affiliated county health departments request an across-the-board increase for their employees. When a layoff is approved by the State Personnel Board, the S&R section is responsible for verifying the tenure of state employees who may be affected. Layoffs caused by a reduced workload, curtailment of funds, or reorganization of departments, agencies, or work units that affect permanent employees are structured according to job classification based on tenure.

In addition, S&R administers the application and selection process for the classified service by establishing valid and reliable selection procedures for recruiting, assessing, and evaluating applicants. This section provides eligible lists of qualified applicants to state agencies and affiliated county health departments for employment consideration. S&R maintains the applicant tracking records, via NEOGOV, and record-keeping system for the classified service and is responsible for the development and improvement of applicant selection procedures. The section assists state agencies and affiliated county health departments in creating a quality workforce that reflects the rich diversity of the state, recognizes merit and welcomes, respects, and values the contributions of all people.

All job recruitment announcements are available on the DOP website. Applicants may review online job announcements from private computers, public access computers located at WorkForce West Virginia offices, college placement offices, public libraries, and mobile devices. Information pertaining to available job opportunities, online testing, and the hiring process is available at: www.personnel.wv.gov. The online application process enables applicants to view and print any job announcement, create a single online application, attach supporting documents, and apply for unlimited open positions.

The DOP is committed to maintaining convenient and accessible online testing opportunities for applicants. Since the beginning of this fiscal year, 922 applicants have taken online exams. Online testing provides applicants greater convenience and allows testing accessibility, expanding recruitment to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusiveness. Though DOP staff continues to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities, applicants now have the benefit via online exams of utilizing their own equipment and software with which they are familiar.

In collaboration with the Office of Technology, the DOP continues to provide online Deputy Sheriff testing for county commission offices that wish to participate. In some cases, staff will still process and score these manually as necessary. The online testing process continues to expedite the hiring process for Deputy Sheriff positions and reduce administrative costs for the DOP and participating commissions.

Job classifications are selected for announcement based upon the recruitment needs of state agencies. The DOP typically responds to an agency request to announce an open position within two (2) business days of the request. Recruitment often begins the same day the request is received. Generally, there are between 175 and 200 open announcements at any given time. This includes continuously announced job titles and current job vacancies open for a limited time.

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Job availability recommendation is a widely used public service provided by the DOP. Individuals seeking employment in state government may visit or call to speak with a Human Resources Specialist who is trained to assess their qualifications and interests and assist them in applying for appropriate jobs. In addition to job informational sessions via phone, email, or in-person, the DOP provides an online tutorial to guide applicants through the State of WV's online application process which may be found at www.personnel.wv.gov under Employment Opportunities.

FY 2024 ACTIVITIES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Personnel Transactions

There were 27,688 personnel transactions reviewed and processed on behalf of covered state agencies during FY 2024. S&R staff also processed 638 transactions for affiliated county health departments. Each transaction S&R processes is reviewed for compliance with applicable state statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, and compensation plans.

Prior Review Program

On April 1, 2024, the S&R section began offering reviews of applications prior to a personnel transaction being submitted in an effort to reduce the number of transactions rejected due to qualifications. Since beginning this process, S&R has completed 94 prior reviews for 13 different agencies.

Applications, PSAs, & Registers

S&R responded to numerous requests for assistance and information pertaining to state employment opportunities. In FY 2024, 1,566 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were provided to the public. A total of 39,064 applications were reviewed and processed during FY 2024. In FY 2024, 6,175 referral lists of qualified eligible applicants were certified to DOP covered agencies for hiring consideration. The DOP has continued to improve referral efficiency and significantly reduce the time it takes to issue a certified list of eligible applicants once the applicant screening process is complete. In FY 2024, the DOP referred 99,478 applicant names to agencies.

S&R continues to offer monthly Question and Answer sessions to statewide agencies to share agency thoughts or concerns with one another or to seek clarification on S&R processes. These have proven to be successful and meaningful for the agencies.

Special Testing events for NRPOs

A total of 30 tests were administered at the request of the Division of Natural Resources during two (2) special testing events for Natural Resources Police Officers (NRPOs).

Auto-Screen Progress

Auto-screening is the process of passing and filtering applicants based on their own responses to job-specific questions. This procedure is used to automate the process of screening applicants for minimum qualifications. Proactively utilizing this process has significantly reduced the scoring and referral process, allowing agencies the DOP serves to fill vacancies more efficiently. Currently, there are 263 titles that utilize this process.

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Online testing for Deputy Sheriffs

The DOP continued to utilize online testing for Deputy Sheriffs for the county commissions, administering 90 online Deputy Sheriff exams in FY 2024. This not only reduced hiring time but also resulted in a reduction in administrative costs associated with manual testing and scoring. Approximately one-third (1/3) of the county commission offices participate in online testing and the remaining offices are provided test booklets and materials upon request. With online testing, the DOP no longer has expenses related to mailing test booklets and materials, the county commission offices no longer have the expense of returning the test booklets and all pertinent materials, and manual scoring of exams is eliminated. The DOP continues to work with the other county commissions to offer and implement this service.

Non-Covered Classification Requests

The DOP continues to advertise positions for agencies exempt from the merit system. The DOP advertised 153 exempt positions during FY 2024.

Recruitment

S&R's recruitment team attended 7 virtual career fairs. These online events allow applicants to learn about state government opportunities and how to apply for our positions. With these open and flexible events, the DOP is able to reach a larger applicant pool within the global market. These events do not require the travel time and resources needed to participate in an in-person job fair. Traditional job fairs are still a very important recruitment tool and the recruitment team participated in 21 in-person career fairs during FY 2024. However, virtual career fairs have allowed the DOP to continue to participate in job fairs and promote our career opportunities. Both the virtual and in-person events enable the DOP to develop strong brand awareness among those seeking employment. S&R will continue to attend informational sessions as well as minority and veterans career fairs aimed at enhancing the diversity of the State's workforce.

Governor's Internship Program

S&R continued its partnership with the Department of Arts, Culture, and History for implementation of the 2024 Governor's Internship Program. This program offered top ranked college students the opportunity to work in paid internships with state agencies with the goal of encouraging these students to remain in West Virginia after graduation. Twenty-one agencies participated this past summer, hiring a total of 40 candidates out of the 246 that applied. S&R continues to serve as an advisor for the Governor's Internship Program.

Miscellaneous

In FY 2024, the S&R section presented 18 proposals to the State Personnel Board. S&R also represented the DOP in 5 Level 2 grievance mediation hearings conducted by the West Virginia Public Employees Grievance Board. The S&R section verified approximately 260 calculations for potential back pay awards and reviewed the corresponding settlement agreements or Payroll Correction Payment Request Forms.

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FACTORS IMPACTING DOP in FY 2025

- The DOP must provide leadership in human resources to classified agencies with limited resources and in a time of rapidly evolving political, social, legal and demographic trends.
- The State continues to be challenged with employee retention issues, salary compression, and employees moving from agency to agency to improve their salary.
 - The DOP is left without tools to address these issues due to compensation limitations.
 - Employee dissatisfaction results in increased expenses related to grievances, new hires, training and turnover.
- It is imperative for the State to continuously update the compensation plan.
 - The pay grades have compressed due to the longstanding absence of merit increases which is compounded by increases in minimum wage.
 - The floor of the salary schedule has been raised to comply with minimum wage requirements; yet, there is minimal movement occurring for current employees within the schedule.
 - The DOP has been permitted to make updates over the past several years. However, the many years of stagnancy prior to these changes have not allowed agencies, employees and applicants to fully feel or understand the benefits.
- Compensation restrictions coupled with continuously diminishing benefits are barriers to competitive recruiting as evidenced by recruiting and retention problems regularly encountered by DOP-covered agencies.
 - To mitigate the recruiting problem, agencies frequently request special hiring rates.
 - Until the compensation parameters are updated, the impact of pay compression and turnover will continue to put a strain on all state agencies attempting to recruit and retain a quality workforce.
- The exemptions from the DOP merit system continue to create challenges that are hard to navigate. The different systems can make it difficult to know how to accurately apply law, rules and policies. In many instances, exempted agencies copy DOP's rules and policies and apply them as they see fit.

CHANGES NEEDED

The following options should be considered by all stakeholders to provide better tools for recruiting and retaining well educated and skilled workers who can replace retirees and individuals affected by relocation and to potentially decrease the number of workers who leave the State for other employment:

- More frequent updates to the salary schedule and compensation plan.
- Offer flexible benefit options for workers seeking non-traditional benefits such as educational loan repayment.

- Encourage promotion within, compensation for meritorious performance, job progression, continuing education, and succession planning.
- Authorize DOP to update the entire DOP statute to create efficiencies in the hiring process and address pay stagnancy.
- Discontinue authorizing exemptions from the DOP's merit system or creating duplicate merit systems.