

OVERVIEW: Solano Human Department of Human Resources (HR), in cooperation with Health and Social Services, developed recruitment videos and an online job fair for the purpose of recruiting and retaining hard to fill positions.

CHALLENGE: Solano County has struggled for many years with the recruitment and retention of high-quality Social Workers to provide County Child Welfare Service (CWS) programs. In April 2016, Social Worker III vacancies had peaked at 22, or 30.5 percent of the 72 allocated positions within CWS. The recruitment challenges – which are shared by most public agencies – includes finding qualified candidates, competition among like-agencies, a long recruitment process, and the very nature of the job itself. Students participating in the federally funded Title IV (e) grant program, a program that pays stipends to students while they attend school and get their master's degree, requires graduates to make a two-year commitment to a public sector CWS program in order for their loans to be repaid. Failure to quickly attract candidates may result in an entire cohort of high-quality individuals being lost to competing agencies. Candidates interested in a Social Worker position with Solano County also faced a long recruitment process, including written and oral board examinations, a hiring interview and reference and background checks – including LiveScan and CORI screening. On average, it takes candidates 74 days from start to finish, an eternity for recent graduates looking to start fulfilling their Title IV (e) commitment. Finally, the very nature of the work itself, including investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect is stressful, resulting in high turn-over.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTION: In an attempt to address these problems, HR, in cooperation with CWS, produced a series of recruitment videos targeting Social Worker III's accompanied by the hosting of a real-time online job fair. The videos, in tandem with the job fair, provided applicants an understanding of desired core competencies, step-by-step instructions on the hiring process, and an overview of CWS Social Worker III salary and benefits. Additionally, as an added benefit of the targeted recruitment, candidates also learned what makes Solano County a great place to live, learn, work and play – making it a mutually beneficial experience for all parties involved. The County also revised its Civil Service Rules to streamline the hiring process to lessen the time of each recruitment. Lastly, in an attempt to address retention concerns, HR created a Retention Interviews process, which was piloted by CWS. The tool gives flexibility to end-users in selecting interview questions they felt were most appropriate, given their particular experiences and concerns involving employee retention. CWS adapted the Retention Interview process tool to identify specific areas of concerns relating to its Social Worker III's. Using the interview results, CWS has created working groups to address identified issues, including, but not limited to policy and procedure development, increasing

communication, increasing employee recognition opportunities and recently re-instituted is all-staff retreat to promote learning, sharing, and teamwork

ORIGINALITY: The concept of producing a series of highly informative videos, coupled with a real-time online job fair – specifically targeted to reach hard to fill positions – is still a relatively new practice in County government. Additionally, the collaborative effort between Solano County HR and Health and Social Services, CWS, further demonstrates how an agency can use original ideas, new technologies and outside the box problem-solving methods to tackle complicated and long-standing challenges.

COST EFFECTIVENESS: Solano County budgeted \$5,000 to produce and host the recruitment videos and real-time online job fair. The investment has proved its cost effectiveness as evident by the number of high-quality candidates the recruitment effort has produced (see results section), in addition to streamlining the application and hiring process for new, existing and future job applicants.

RESULTS: The Social Worker III recruitment videos and real-time online job fair effort has been a tremendous success for Solano County, including employees, the department and the community. The collaborative effort between HR and Health and Social Services has resulted in the department successfully hiring 31 Social Workers since April, 2016 in the CWS division. As of June 1, 2017, CWS has gone from 22 Social Worker vacancies to only four (4). At this time, 44 qualified candidates currently reside on the department's Social Worker III eligibility list, more now than at any other time in history. The County's recruitment effort has also significantly reduced the time it takes for perspective Social Workers to maneuver through the recruitment process, condensing the timeline down from an average of 74 days to a more manageable 62 days. Additionally, CWS has used the experience to create employee working groups, focused on taking steps to identify and address employee related issues, including, but not limited to policy and procedure development, enhanced communication techniques, improved job-training and job-sharing opportunities and employee development and recognition celebrations. By reducing the number of Social Worker III vacancies in the Health and Social Services department, the County is better positioned to provide high-quality programs and services to children and families in the community while placing fewer burdens on the Social Worker IIIs – resulting in a more productive, collaborative and enjoyable team environment. View the videos at <https://youtu.be/fhETm3JtJTQ>.

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