



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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May 13, 2020

TO: Agency Directors

FROM: David Schumacher
Director

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS TO IMPLEMENT HIRING FREEZE

In response to the state economy and financial outlook, effective May 18, 2020, Governor Inslee has directed state agencies under his authority to implement a freeze on hiring employees for positions not related to public safety or other non-discretionary activities. We have provided these instructions to guide agency implementation of the hiring freeze directive.

State agencies under the governor's authority are prohibited from filling a new or vacant position unless it directly impacts public safety, is essential to health and welfare activities, generates revenue, is required to meet statutory mandates, or is related to the state's response to the pandemic. The hiring freeze applies to all new hires, regardless of fund source or permanent/temporary status.

Requests for additional exemptions from the hiring freeze for the purpose of maintaining critical services may be approved by the Office of Financial Management. I have delegated to the State Human Resources Division the responsibility to receive, review, and approve or deny exemption requests.

Monitoring

State HR will monitor enterprise data related to new hires and appointments, turnover and headcount on a monthly basis. Agency directors are encouraged to maintain internal records for the implementation of the hiring freeze and may be asked to provide documentation to State HR. This [hiring freeze exemption tracking log](#) may be useful to you in tracking your hiring activities.

State HR will track all of the exemption requests received and notify you when a decision has been made on your request.

Activities exempt from hiring freeze

Due to the connection to the health and safety of Washington residents or to the protection of public assets, the following activities are exempt from the hiring freeze:

- Direct custody, supervision, and patient care in corrections and juvenile rehabilitation programs; institutions for the care of veterans and individuals with mental illnesses or developmental disabilities; state psychiatric hospitals; the Special Commitment Center; School for the Blind, and Washington Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth;
- Direct protective services to children and other vulnerable clients of the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Department of Social and Health Services;
- Washington State Patrol investigative services and field enforcement (troopers);

- Hazardous materials response and emergency cleanup;
- Public health laboratory, and emergency public health and patient safety response;
- Military operations and emergency management within the Military Department;
- Firefighting activities;
- Enforcement officers at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Liquor and Cannabis Board, State Gambling Commission, and Department of Natural Resources;
- Park rangers at the Parks and Recreation Commission;
- Employees hired on a seasonal basis by the Department of Agriculture for insect detection and inspection and certification of agricultural products; and
- Other positions related to health, safety and welfare and any unforeseen, emergent circumstances involving critical state operations.

Exemption is also granted for activities directly involved in producing revenue:

- Tax and fee collection, auditing and recovery;
- State Lottery operations; and
- Activities necessary to receive or maintain federal funds by the state.

Specific hiring authorization from State HR is not required for activities that agency directors determine meet the above activities, but agencies must keep a log of all hires made and the applicable exception.

Process for requesting hiring freeze exemptions

Agencies requesting an exemption to the hiring freeze for hires that do not meet one of the exceptions must send a [hiring freeze exemption request form](#) signed by their director to Hiringfreeze@ofm.wa.gov. Requests will be reviewed daily by State HR.

Questions

We have developed a Q&A document that is available on the [State HR portal](#) to help answer your questions about the hiring freeze. If you cannot find your answer and still need assistance, please send your specific questions to State HR at Hiringfreeze@ofm.wa.gov.

We appreciate the challenges this creates for state managers and will do what we can to help whenever possible.