



Guidelines for Citywide Hiring Freeze

April 27, 2020

As a cost-savings measure to efficiently utilize organizational resources, there is a freeze on citywide hiring, effective immediately. During this period, Department Heads are asked to suspend any and all hiring activities.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley is assessing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we begin to assess the pandemic's impact on our community, strategic steps are being made to manage our resources. Recognizing the magnitude of challenges ahead, including the great stress on our limited resources, the City's focus is the continuity of essential functions.

The City recognizes this hiring freeze policy will create hardships across the organization. To minimize this impact, Department Heads may request exceptions, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the City Manager. The limited exceptions will focus on preserving critical organizational functions to protect the general welfare and safety of our constituents and employees, remain compliant, and minimize risk exposure.

EXCEPTION PROCESS

A Supervisor or Manager must use NeoGov's requisition process to initiate an exception request. The request must include the following:

1) Rationale

Request must demonstrate this position fills essential functions. Factors include:

- The position is necessary to protect public health and safety
- The position performs a mandated function or essential municipal service
- The position is necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic
- The position is the only classification that performs a particular function and there is no other way to perform the function

2) Funding Source

Request must detail the specific funding / budget for the position, such as:

- General Fund
- Special Fund or Enterprise Fund such as:
 - Gas Tax
 - Marina
 - Parking (Off Street and/or On Street)
 - Permit Service Center
 - Sewer
 - Zero Waste
- Grant Fund

3) Impact

Request must document the impact to the general welfare and safety of the City and any organizational risk if left unfilled; including, but not limited to essential service disruption, compliance hazards, potential incurred liability, and/or financial impacts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How does the Hiring Freeze work?

A: The Hiring Freeze means that, except for limited exceptions as listed above, no new positions may be posted and no offers may be made for existing approved requisitions or positions that are currently posted, without an exception approved by the City Manager.

Q: Can I request an exception to the Hiring Freeze?

A: Yes. There may be some circumstances where a position must be filled. The Hiring Freeze will be overseen by the City Manager and exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, when it can be demonstrated that:

- Not filling the position would result in a significant impact on public health and safety, business disruption, significant compliance risk, result in liability being incurred, or significant loss in revenue; or
- The job is mission-critical, essential to business operations, or necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; and no qualified current staff is available to take on additional duties on an interim basis.

Q: What is the process to request an exception to the hiring freeze?

A: To request an exception using a NEW requisition, the Hiring Manager / Department must use the existing NeoGov requisition process as outlined below.

To request an exception using an EXISTING requisition, exception criteria as listed above, must be included in the documentation. For current recruitments or positions in which conditional offers have been extended, Hiring Freeze exception requests must be submitted to a Deputy City Manager or City Manager. Departments will continue to follow the existing requisition process.

At any step of the approval process, the requisition can be approved, placed on hold, or denied. Requisitions containing insufficient information or denied in the Budget Approval Queue or Step 4 will not move forward. There are five steps in the existing requisition process:

Step	Owner	Action Needed	Important Notes
1	Hiring Manager	Initiates request	Must include rationale, funding, and impact as outlined above.
2	Department Head	Approves the requisition	
3	HR Transactions	Confirms if vacancy exists; and reviews requisition for key criteria	Returns to Department if incomplete or no vacancy.
4	Budget	Confirms funding; and Approve or Deny the requisition	Approves or Denies the exception request
5	HR Director	Moves the approved requisition forward	

Q: I have work that needs to be done, but it does not qualify for an exception. What are my options?

A: If you have a vacant position, you can conduct an “internal only” recruitment if you obtain approval from the City Manager. Departments will continue to follow the standard recruitment processes, including postings that should be listed in Berkeley Matters. There is no guarantee that an exception will be granted.

Q: What about active hiring processes?

A: All open positions currently in recruitment that do not have an offer extended or accepted are currently suspended and subject to review. Any previously scheduled interviews prior to April 27, 2020 can continue while an exception is being requested. However, there is no guarantee that an exception will be granted.

Q: Does this Hiring Freeze apply to temporary, provisional or part-time hires?

A: Yes. All temporary, provisional or part-time hires (renewals, extensions, and new positions) requested on April 27, 2020 or later must go through the exceptions process previously outlined. If using an existing requisition, it must be updated to include required rationale and budget information or it will be denied.

Q: What if an offer has already been extended?

A: Conditional offers may be rescinded and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. All confirmed employment offers extended to and accepted by candidates will be honored and the candidate will be hired; however, start dates can be negotiated.