

City of Albuquerque

Office of Internal Audit

FOLLOW-UP OF THE
CITYWIDE VETERANS HIRING
INITIATIVE

Report 24-22-114

Date: June 26, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Internal Audit (OIA) issued its report for Audit No. 22-114, “Citywide Veterans Hiring Initiative,” on April 27, 2022. The original report identified eight (8) recommendations. OIA completed a follow-up to determine the corrective actions that the Human Resources Department (HRD) has taken in response to the report. The report contains seven (7) recommendations: one (1) recommendation that was implemented and closed during previous monitoring activities performed by OIA, three (3) that have been implemented and are now considered closed, and four (4) that remain open as identified in this report.

BACKGROUND

OIA completed a performance audit of the City of Albuquerque’s (City) HRD Veterans Hiring Initiative practices. This audit was included in OIA’s fiscal year 2022 audit plan. The audit scope was from July 11, 2019, through December 31, 2021. Specifically, the audit objectives were to do the following:

- Determine whether the firing of veteran candidates complies with applicable City policies and Administrative Instructions.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the City’s Veterans Hiring Initiative.

In 2019, the program was codified into City policy as Administrative Instruction 7-57 *Military Veterans Hiring Initiative* (AI 7-57). The initiative provides persons who served, applicants currently serving in active duty service in the National Guard or Reserve, and their spouses the advantage of guaranteed interview consideration for vacant advertised City positions for which they apply and are qualified. To be eligible, the applicant must meet the minimum qualifications for the position of interest, provide documentation evidencing their eligibility, and submit a completed application through the City’s applicant tracking system (NEOGOV). Once the applicant submits their application, the application process follows the standard hiring practices overseen by the City’s HRD. Qualified candidates for the positions are determined by HRD’s Human Resource Coordinators (HRCs) who are responsible for assisting departments with human resource functions. The HRC verifies that the applicant has included the appropriate supporting documentation with their application. Qualified candidates' applications are then routed to the department hiring manager who determines which candidates to interview, except veterans hiring preference applicants, who are guaranteed an interview. However, it does not guarantee that they will be offered the job.

The audit found that opportunities exist to further improve the Veterans Hiring Initiative within the City. The following issues were identified as part of the original audit:

- The City does not track veteran applicants and hiring data to measure and assess whether the Veterans Hiring Initiative program effectively meets its intended purpose.

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- The audit could not determine whether all qualified veteran applicants included in the sample were offered or received an interview as required by AI 7-57, as it is unclear whether veteran hiring preferences apply to unclassified positions and because supporting documentation could not always be provided.
- Veteran applicants did not always attach the required documentation which may be a result of the lack of detailed information on the City's career website and application workflow.

Further information about the audit scope, limitations, and methodology can be found in Appendix A of the original audit report.

FOLLOW-UP OBJECTIVE

The objective of this follow-up was to determine whether HRD has taken the corrective actions recommended in OIA's April 27, 2022. Consistent with Government Auditing Standards, Section 9.08, promulgated by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the purpose of audit reports includes facilitating a follow-up to determine whether appropriate corrective actions have been taken. This field follow-up is a non-audit service. Government Auditing Standards do not cover non-audit services, which are defined as professional services other than audits or attestation engagements. Therefore, HRD is responsible for the substantive outcomes of the work performed during this follow-up and is responsible to be in a position, in fact, and appearance, to make an informed judgment on the results of the non-audit service. OIA limited our scope to actions taken to address our audit recommendation from the original audit report dated April 27, 2022, through the submission of actions on May 9, 2024.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective, OIA did the following:

- Obtained documentary evidence from HRD.
- Interviewed HRD staff to understand and verify the status and nature of the corrective actions taken.
- Verified the status of the recommendations that HRD had reported as implemented.
- Performed testing on a sample of 42 veteran applicants¹ to determine that qualified candidates were provided interviews as required by AI 7-57.

RESULTS

Of the seven (7) recommendations in-progress, OIA determined that three (3) recommendations have been implemented and are now considered closed and four (4) remain open. Testing identified that of the three (3) individuals who qualified for interviews per AI 7-57, one (1) applicant who should have received an interview did not due to manual error². OIA recommends timely implementation of the outstanding recommendations to mitigate this from reoccurring. Similar issues were identified in the OIG Investigative Report 24-0060-C Allegation of non-

¹ OIA selected 48 applicants for detailed testwork procedures. However, six (6) were duplicates, leaving 42 applicants.

² Per the associated HRC, the candidate did not move forward in the hiring workflow process due to a failure to indicate so in NEOGOV by the HRC. Of the other individuals qualified for interviews tested one was hired and one did not show up for the interview.

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compliance with the Military Veteran's Initiative Administrative Instruction 7-57 when hiring for the Risk manager Position issued on May 24, 2024³ . OIA will continue to monitor the status of the open recommendations.

See ATTACHMENT 1.

³ https://www.cabq.gov/inspectorgeneral/documents/24-0060-c_investigative_report-final.pdf/@download/file/24-0060-C_Investigative_Report-Final.pdf

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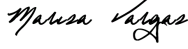
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ATTACHMENT 1

Recommendations	Responsible Agency	Department Response	OIA Conclusion	<u>OIA Use Only</u> Status Determination
<p><u>Recommendation #1:</u></p> <p>Work with City Administration to establish quantifiable goals and formalize monitoring activities in order to measure and evaluate the impact of the City's Veterans Hiring Initiative. These efforts should include tracking the number of qualified veterans that applied for positions, were interviewed, and were offered and accepted the position.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“City administration has approved a revised version of AI 7-57 as of April 16, 2024. (Attached) HRD is implementing and will monitor follow up reporting from NEOGOV on HRCs’ dispositioning of veteran applicants, qualified veteran applicants that receive an interview, and veterans that receive appointment to open position. HRD will pull these reports on a monthly basis beginning in May 2024.”</p> <p>Documentation: AI 7-57</p> <p>Completion: May 2024</p>	<p>OIA reviewed AI 7-57 and recognizes that HRD has developed a policy and process for monitoring and reporting. Due to these new activities starting in May 2024, there is no further documentation provided to review at this time.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>

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Recommendations	Responsible Agency	Department Response	OIA Conclusion	<u>OIA Use Only</u> Status Determination
<p><u>Recommendation #2:</u></p> <p>Define whether the Veterans Hiring Initiative is applicable to both classified and unclassified positions in Administrative Instruction 7-57 <i>Military Veterans Hiring Initiative</i> and other related policies and guidance.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“The revised version of AI 7-57 enacted on April 16, 2024 applies only to classified positions.”</p> <p>Documentation: AI 7-57</p> <p>Completion: April 16, 2024</p>	<p>OIA reviewed AI 7-57 and identified that the updated document applies only to classified positions.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Open <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>
<p><u>Recommendation #4:</u></p> <p>Implement a periodic, routine review of applicants to ensure Veterans Hiring Initiative requirements have been adhered to. Evaluate the process from application through hiring and determine that necessary documentation is recorded.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“HRD’s monthly NEOGOV reporting will enable monthly Department reviews to ensure qualified veterans are being interviewed, unqualified veterans are being dispositioned, and hired veterans are being recorded. This data will be captured and reported quarterly to the administration, and addressed to departments monthly.</p> <p>HRD will conduct random periodic audits to assess compliance with AI 7-57.”</p> <p>Documentation: AI 7-57</p>	<p>OIA reviewed AI 7-57 and recognizes the process HRD has put in place in NEOGOV to ensure accurate reporting and conducting periodic audits. However, due to the reporting starting in May 2024 and being captured and reported quarterly, there is no documentation provided to review at this time. There was also an error identified by OIA during testing as indicated in the body of the report. This recommendation remains open.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>

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		<p>Completion: May 2024</p>		
<p><u>Recommendation #5:</u> Add standard language to City job postings stating that supporting documents must be attached to each application submitted.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“The City’s application form currently states that applicants who self-identify as a veteran or spouse of a veteran must provide proof of service must and [sic] upload it in the required documentation section of the application process.</p> <p>Notice is also provided on the main job board page when applying for positions. The web link is www.governmentjobs.com/careers/cabq”</p> <p>Documentation: The website link is www.governmentjobs.com/careers/cabq AI 7-57</p> <p>Completion: N/A</p>	<p>OIA reviewed AI 7-57 and the web link provided by HRD. OIA was able to locate the updates on the city website where there is a link to AI 7-57. In addition, the application form currently states proof of service needs to be uploaded if the applicant indicated they are a veteran or spouse of a veteran.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Open <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>
<p><u>Recommendation #6:</u></p>	<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>“HRD has found that it is impossible to</p>	<p>OIA understands that there are</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Open <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed</p>

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<p>Determine if it is feasible to include a hyperlink to Administrative Instruction 7-57 <i>Military Veterans Hiring Initiative</i> from the veteran/military spouse question asked in the Citywide supplemental questions.</p>	<p>Department (HRD)</p>	<p>include a link to the AI on the application. However, the notice to upload the documentation is noted on the application and the jobs website.</p> <p>A link is also currently available under the City Rules and Regulations web page.</p> <p>A link is also available on the Central HR Employment Opportunities webpage with a description about veteran hiring practices.”</p> <p>Documentation: AI 7-57</p> <p>The web link is www.governmentjobs.com/careers/cabq</p> <p>Completion: N/A</p>	<p>limitations to the functionality of the City’s job website. OIA reviewed the updates and changes made to the website and AI 7-57 that outline how an applicant wishing to qualify for veteran’s preference can do so.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>

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<p><u>Recommendation #7:</u></p> <p>Determine whether the dropdown in the “Attachments” section of the City’s career website can be modified to include labels that refer to document types within Administrative Instruction 7-57 Military Veterans Hiring Initiative and whether the workflow can be modified so the “Attachments” section is after the “Questions” portion of the application.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“Department will investigate opportunities in NEOGOV to add drop-down menu options to make it more obvious where veteran status documents should be uploaded.”</p> <p>Documentation: AI 7-57</p> <p>Completion: N/A</p>	<p>OIA understands that the department will investigate whether this is feasible to add a drop-down menu option to upload veteran status documents.</p> <p>This recommendation remains open.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>
<p><u>Recommendation #8:</u></p> <p>Require that for those who answer in the affirmative to the veteran/military spouse question asked in the Citywide supplemental questions, that an attachment be uploaded prior to moving forward in the application workflow.</p>	<p>Human Resources Department (HRD)</p>	<p>“All qualified applicants that select the veteran or spouse of a veteran status in the application should still receive an interview regardless of whether or not the documentation is uploaded at time of application. The documentation will be collected at or after the interview for all veteran candidates that are selected for hire. This is reflected in HRD’s training for HR professionals and coordinators at the City.”</p>	<p>OIA reviewed AI 7-57 and recognizes the process HRD has put in place in NEOGOV to ensure an accurate process and training of the HR Professionals and Coordinators. There is no documentation provided.</p> <p>Per conversation with HR management. The updated 7-57 AI under procedure #3</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Closed <input type="checkbox"/> Contested</p>

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Recommendations	Responsible Agency	Department Response	OIA Conclusion	<u>OIA Use Only</u> Status Determination
		Documentation: AI 7-57 Completion: N/A	where language was changed from shall to may was a typo and is in the process of being updated. No timeframe at this time. This recommendation remains open.	