



2014 Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination Leadership in State Human Resource Management

James A. Honchar, SPHR

Deputy Secretary for Human Resources Management
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Governor's Office of Administration
517 Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Telephone: (717) 787-8191
Fax: (717) 783-4429
Email: jhonchar@pa.gov

James A. Honchar was appointed Deputy Secretary for Human Resources Management for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2007. Jim is responsible for policy direction and leading the commonwealth's centralized human resource services including the HR Service Center; classification, pay, benefits and workers compensation systems; negotiating and administering collective bargaining agreements; recruiting for all non-civil service positions; ensuring training in leadership, management and supervisory skills; planning for and addressing gaps in the workplace due to shifting demographics and employee separations; and overseeing the Equal Employment Opportunity program for all agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction.

Jim has been a human resources professional with the commonwealth since 1988. Prior to his current role, he served as the Director of Human Resources for the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. Previously, he held human resources positions as a Division Chief for Classification, Recruitment and Placement and as a Labor Relations Analyst.

Since 1990, Jim has been certified by the Human Resources Certification Institute as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. In 1995 he was awarded Lifetime Certification at the Senior Professional designation. Jim also holds trainer/facilitator certifications from Achieve Global/Zenger-Miller and Excel Development Systems. He is a member of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) and the Capital Area Public Human Resources Association (CAPHRA).

Jim earned a Master's Degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations from Saint Francis University and a Bachelor's Degree in Business from the University of Pittsburgh.

1) Describe how the nominee has demonstrated leadership by participating on major state government committees, task forces and/or special projects related to state human resource management.

Jim is currently leading the HR professionals across the commonwealth in developing the strategic plan to build our workforce of the future, with teams focused on three key areas: HR Service Delivery/HR as a Strategic Partner, Talent Management, and Total Compensation. The teams are analyzing the changing employee demographics, evaluating technological advances, identifying the types of positions needed going forward, identifying innovative recruitment approaches and appropriate compensation modifications.

Jim serves on the Board of Trustees of the Pennsylvania Employees Benefit Trust Fund (PEBTF), an independent health and welfare fund that administers health benefits for nearly 300,000 state employees, retirees and their covered dependents. Jim also serves on three key committees within the PEBTF: 1) Task Force, which considers how to proactively manage health benefits through plan design, employee behavior, and collaboration with providers; 2) Eligibility, which is tasked with reviewing member appeals; and 3) Personnel, which provides guidance and expertise regarding the fund's internal human resource policies.

Jim is a member of the steering committee focused on the commonwealth's performance management system and processes, and a committee guiding the commonwealth's workplace safety initiative to reduce work-related injuries by 25 percent by September 2015. Jim was also an instrumental member of the project steering committee for the HR Service Center, which successfully launched in 2010, and remained actively involved on its governance team.

Jim holds monthly meetings with all state agency human resource directors and leads the HR discussion with agency deputy secretaries of administration at their quarterly meeting.

2) Describe how the nominee has demonstrated exceptional leadership in the field of human resource management beyond your state human resources organization.

Jim has been certified by the Human Resources Certification Institute as a Senior Professional in

Human Resources since 1990, was awarded Lifetime Certification at the Senior Professional designation in 1995, and travels to monitor some testing of new candidates for SPHR. Jim holds trainer/facilitator certifications from Achieve Global/Zenger-Miller and Excel Development Systems. He is an active member of the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) and the Capital Area Public Human Resources Association (CAPHRA). Through his involvement in CAPHRA agenda planning meetings and his presentations at its annual Spring Conference, Jim provides guidance that is instrumental in ensuring the continued development of HR professionals in the region.

Last year, Jim moderated a panel discussion on the workforce of the future at Government Technology magazine's Pennsylvania Executive Leadership Forum and delivered a presentation on how the commonwealth is leveraging technology in HR service delivery at the National Association of State Technology Directors Annual Conference. Additionally, he is a guest lecturer for undergraduate and graduate students attending Cheyney University, Penn State University and Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities. At the request of the Shippensburg University Public Administration Student Association, Jim has also served as a guest instructor, providing career guidance to students at the University's Resume Workshops.

3) Describe the nominee's leadership and/or management skills in implementing human resource management programs.

To the Governor's Office, the Office of General Counsel and the nearly 40 agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction, Jim is considered a critical resource and the "go to" person for resolving issues. Jim's professional training, more than 25 years working in all critical aspects of Human Resources, and his demeanor provide him the critical skills necessary to communicate and interact effectively with everyone including the Governor, union leadership, agency heads, his direct leadership team, agency human resource directors and front line employees. It is through

Jim's superior leadership and management skills that he has been able to achieve leading edge initiatives in Pennsylvania such as establishing the consolidated Human Resources Service Center and continuing to consolidate agency HR offices. He is actively engaged in efforts that demonstrate the value of human resources in government.

4) Describe how the nominee has demonstrated leadership within the NASPE organization in support of NASPE's mission to share information on human resource issues so that members can better achieve their state's mission and business objectives. Include evidence of local or national acclaim in the field and influence on other states' personnel executives.

Jim has been a member of NASPE's Executive Committee since 2011 and currently serves as president-elect. Just this March, he represented NASPE on the Alliance to Transform State Government Operations in Washington, D.C. Jim chairs the Meetings Committee helping to plan NASPE's 2014 annual conference, and was a member of the Meetings Committee for NASPE's 2012 mid-year and annual meetings. He also served as NASPE Treasurer during the 2012-13 program year. In addition, Jim has participated in panel discussions hosted by NASPE on HR service delivery. As the commonwealth's main point of contact for NASPE inquiries from other states, he ensures responses are provided to all requests received. Jim has coordinated opportunities for NASPE member states to tour PA's HR Service Center and view demonstrations of HR software and solutions. Jim's NASPE involvement has benefited the commonwealth by providing resources and a network of contacts for the advancement of the human resources community.

5) Describe any relevant state human resource management programs or initiatives that were successful because of the nominee's involvement.

Despite the significant budgetary challenges and workforce reductions that have defined the Great Recession for state governments, Jim has successfully championed investments in technology to transform HR service delivery. In 2010, the commonwealth launched the HR Service Center (HRSC), an enterprise-wide shared services organization that offers employee call center support, processes high-volume HR transactions, manages the enterprise HR/Payroll

system and provides centralized business reporting for 38 agencies and 80,000 employees under the Governor's jurisdiction, saving approximately \$3.5 million annually. In 2012, the HRSC launched a comprehensive Onboarding program for new employees that is saving an additional \$1 million per year. The HRSC has also assumed responsibility for the management of military leave. These efforts help to free-up HR staff in state agencies to focus on strategic functions such as workforce planning, training and labor relations.

With over 11,000 employees or 15 percent of the workforce eligible to retire, Jim has renewed the commonwealth's focus on workforce/succession planning and analyzing how changes in technology and agency needs will affect the types of employees we must begin to recruit both now and in the future. Jim has also guided the consolidation of HR offices of state agencies with similar missions or workforces.

Jim was instrumental in helping to coordinate and implement significant changes to the Retired Employee Health Plan. In 2010, the commonwealth restructured the health plans offered throughout the state in order to optimize its purchasing power and decrease administrative costs. Jim participated in an extensive request-for-proposal process that resulted in the selection of new health plans that provide similar coverage, while cutting expenditures for this coverage by 16% or approximately \$16 million annually. In 2013, the commonwealth continued its efforts to provide quality retiree health care by offering an Employer Group Waiver Plan to all Medicare-eligible members that provides enhanced benefits (expanding covered medications and increasing the number of retail pharmacies that offer up to a 90-day supply) while saving \$12 million annually.

Jim's leadership was also vital in the implementation of a new learning management system to standardize and centralize functionality for state agencies, improve operational efficiencies, obtain cost effective services and provide a stable platform to meet enterprise and agency training needs.

Jim's contributions to the HR profession and state government are numerous and significant, and he has earned the respect of government leaders and HR professionals both here in Pennsylvania and around the nation. Individuals of Jim's caliber are truly rare, and deserving of the highest recognition.