2025 NASPEs AWARD
Eva N. Santos Communication Awards

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

NOMINATION INFORMATION

Title of Nomination: Toolkit for Executive Order 24-04: Increasing Employment Opportunities in Washington State Government   State: WA

Contact Person: Mia Navarro

Contact's Title: Deputy Chief Cultural Officer

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NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Nominator: Mia Navarro   Title: Deputy Chief Cultural Officer

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ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:
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DETAILS

Feel free to include links to websites and snapshots as part of your nomination.

1. Please provide a brief description of the submission. - Executive Order 24-04 Tool Kit

Executive Order 24-04 | Toolkit | Part One

Increasing employment opportunities in Washington state government

In this toolkit you will find initial guidance on the following:

- Agency plans for competency-based hiring
- Anti-bias training and objectives
- Communication and organization change management plan
- Competency-based hiring
- Competency-based hiring resources
- Examples of how to eliminate degree requirements on job postings
- On-line recruiting system consistency guidelines
- On-line recruiting system standardization checklist
- Pay equity lens guidance
- Toolkit for improving equity in hiring and recruiting

Future releases will include equity competencies, pay equity plan guidance and reporting process, OLRS demographic data reporting process, and the statewide equity competency assessment.

EO 24-04 does not technically apply to higher education institutions, but we do encourage higher ed institutions to take steps to meet the intent of the EO in your organization. SHB 2216 regarding college degree requirements does apply to higher ed, so institutions of higher education will want to consult with their Assistant Attorney General for any questions regarding that legislation.

Our intention is to provide guidance and support that is helpful for agencies to implement this EO. As we release guidance and information, we want to know if it is meeting that mark, and if not, we want to hear from you what additional information and support would be helpful. Some of the future support under consideration include additional training resources, guidance to help determine whether or not qualifications such as English proficiency, driver's licenses, lifting 50 lbs., etc. are essential to a position, support for applicants with this change, and ways agencies can share information and promising practices with one another.

Toolkit

- Agency plans for competency-based hiring
- Anti-bias training and objectives
- Communication and organization change management plan
- Competency-based hiring
- Competency-based hiring resources
- Eliminate degree requirements as the only way to qualify for jobs
- OLRS consistency guidelines
- Pay equity lens guidance
- Toolkit for improving equity in hiring and recruiting

Information session

- Information session video - 3/5/2025

Related

- Bill to eliminate degree requirements that are unnecessary
- Executive Order - Increasing employment opportunities
- Department of Enterprise Services
- Office of Equity

Research

- Skills-based strategies for the public sector - National Governors Association research publication

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In December of 2024, outgoing Governor Jay Inslee signed Executive Order 24-04: Increasing Employment Opportunities in Washington State Government (EO 24-04). EO 24-04 instructs agencies to remove barriers to state employment such as unnecessary degree and other requirements and move towards skills and competency-based hiring. Washington State Human Resources (State HR) created the EO 24-04 toolkit to help agencies implement this EO.

The Toolkit is organized into sections based on the feedback provided from state agencies as to what they would need in order to successfully implement and operationalize the EO. It includes:

-Agency plans for competency-based hiring – to learn from each other and identify enterprise progress
-Anti-bias training and objectives – targeted intervention based on data demonstrating a key barrier to employment for historically marginalized communities is during the interview
-Communication and organization change management plan – a key ask from smaller agencies with fewer specialized positions to build this resource
-Competency-based hiring resources – templates and best practices for agencies to use to move from degree/years of experience requirements to competencies in job descriptions, application assessment and interview questions
-Applicant Tracking System consistency guidelines – training and other resources to create standard processes in a federated environment to ensure a more consistent candidate experience and enterprise data
-Pay equity lens – templates and guidance for agencies to use to ensure best practices are followed when determining pay for new hires
-Improving equity in hiring and recruiting – a set of resources for the full-cycle recruitment process to help recruiters and hiring managers to mitigate bias and ensure full equal opportunity of all applicants to compete for the job

2.   How long has the submission been inexistence?

A cross-agency team began building the policy/executive order and its resource material in October of 2023. Initial drafts and templates were shared with an enterprise HR manager and DEI meetings in February of 2024, and went through an iterative feedback cycle to ensure that the final policy (including key milestone deadlines to demonstrate progress) were feasible to implement and to ensure agencies were prepared to operationalize the policies once they were in effect. The Executive Order was signed in December of 2024, and the toolkit formally published in January of 2025.

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3.   Why was this submission created?

Feedback from state agencies across the enterprise highlighted a key challenge to meeting requirements outlined in previous Executive Orders and SHR directives was the lack of resources and clarity on expectations. After reviewing an initial draft of the Executive Order, agencies identified specific resources or information they would need in order to change their practices and procedures to be able to achieve the outcomes identified in the EO.

The toolkit is a compilation of all of the resources requested from agencies so that they could be successful in meeting the requirements of the EO. The EO has four main sections: Hiring Standardization (use of the Applicant Tracking System NeoGov), Improving Access to State Employment, Improving Washington State Government's Equity Competency, Recruitment and Hiring Requirement (addressing unconscious bias in hiring), and Pay Equity. https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/24-04%20-%20Hiring%20%28tmp%29.pdf

This toolkit is an example of user-centered design. Agencies were involved from the beginning to identify the core components of the toolkit and what specific resources should be included. Every resource that is included in the toolkit was also built with a diverse representation of folks including hiring managers, recruiters, change management professionals, DEI professionals, HR specialists, and job applicants to ensure all of the people involved in the hiring process had input so that the resources were applicable to helping achieve the intent of the EO.

4.   How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

Washington State HR has four strategic priorities:

1) A division of work that is focused on impact (to the communities we serve)
2) A culture of belonging where every SHR team member has the tools, skills, bandwidth, and clarity of expectations to thrive in their role
3) The HR community and systems are "ready" to transition to the OneWA ERP.
4) Our systems and work are proactively addressing the priorities of the Legislature, Governor, and agency priorities and agile enough to pivot when necessary

This EO and toolkit supports all four of our strategic priorities. Specifically:
- The only way that we can have an impact on the people we serve is if we have a workforce that is representative of the people we serve and has the skills to provide culturally relevant services. We have extensive data to show that we are not yet providing that impact consistently across government and a key lever identified to achieve greater impact is to remove the barriers to employment that many qualified individuals (who have the skills to provide greater impact) are facing.

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- Building this toolkit required investing in the growth and development of our State HR team members and HR team members across the enterprise. Additionally, the toolkit includes training and templates and provide additional on-the-job training for HR leaders and hiring managers to help support their ability to carry out their functions with this new expectation of how work should be done in Washington.
- The consistency guidelines/trainings for the applicant tracking system is creating a more standard process across our state (which has a fully federated recruitment practice) including definitions. This is a key readiness activity for all HR systems that needs to occur before moving to a centralized ERP.
- The toolkit was fully co-created from identifying key components to all of the details in each of the resources to ensure the user and their priorities were centered in its design. It was also done prior to the signing of the EO to ensure agencies were proactively prepared to implement the EO as soon as it was signed.

5.   Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

We are measuring effectiveness in a series of different ways:

- Communication effectiveness (of questions received) – initially, we were getting dozens of emails, teams messages, phone calls, and in-person questions from state agencies about the EO and what they need to do to meet the requirements. After the formal publishing of the toolkit in January of 2025, the number of questions significantly decreased to now it is less than one formal question per day.
- System readiness (% of agencies with complete ATS data) – prior to publishing the training and resources for how to use NEOGOV, data was inconsistent across the enterprise. Currently, all agencies are now using the applicant tracking system in a way that ensures candidate demographic data is now showing up in all steps outlined in the recruitment process so that we can now pull enterprise data to see where people may be disproportionally falling out in the process.
- Removal of barriers (% of job postings that do not have a degree requirement unless required by law – currently all jobs posted on the careers.wa.gov website have either skills qualifications or contain a degree + alternative pathway requirement unless a degree is required by law to perform the essential functions of the job (i.e. medical practitioner).

As this is a newly established toolkit, these are the initial measures we have identified that we can review to determine the effectiveness of the toolkit as a whole as well as whether the resources are helping to change processes. Once the toolkit has been in place for a longer time, we will develop additional measures to identify whether the toolkit is helping to change outcomes (i.e. demographic makeup of our workforce, time-to-hire, etc.)