

# STAFF REPORT



## MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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**DATE:** June 3, 2025

**TO:** Justin Hess, City Manager

**FROM:** Betsy McClinton, Management Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Annual Report on Citywide Vacancies and Recruitment and Retention Efforts in Compliance with Assembly Bill 2561

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Note and file.

### **BACKGROUND**

AB 2561, effective January 1, 2025, was passed to address the issue of job vacancies in local government, which negatively impact service delivery and employee workload. The new law requires local government agencies to hold at least one public hearing per year to report on workforce vacancy rates, recruitment and retention efforts, and any issues that lead to obstacles in the hiring process.

Additional requirements include:

- The hearing must occur prior to the adoption of the annual budget.
- Recognized labor groups must be allowed to speak at the hearing.
- If 20% or more of positions in a labor group are vacant, labor groups may request certain additional information at the hearing, including number of vacancies, number of applicants, average time to hire, and suggestions for improved compensation and working conditions.

Each of the City's six labor groups was invited and allocated five minutes to speak following staff's presentation. The labor groups are not required to attend or speak. Staff randomly selected the order that the labor groups will present, should they choose to speak.

1. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

2. Burbank Fire Fighters Association – Chief Officers’ Unit (BFFCOU)
3. Burbank Fire Fighters Association (BFF)
4. Burbank Management Association (BMA)
5. Burbank Police Officers’ Association (BPOA)
6. Burbank City Employees’ Association (BCEA)

## **DISCUSSION**

This report is divided into several sections. The first four sections provide data regarding the City’s general workforce, vacancy rates, number of recruitments and timeframes, and number of employees put through background and timeframes. The last three sections address the City’s ongoing recruitment and retention efforts, recruitment process improvements, and obstacles in the hiring process.

### *General Workforce Data*

From Fiscal Years (FYs) 2023-24 to 2024-25, the City’s budgeted fulltime equivalent positions (FTEs) increased from 1,508.113 to 1,535.76. Attachment 1, Table 1 shows the City’s budgeted FTEs for each FY by labor or employee group. Table 2 shows the same data arranged by department.

### *Vacancy Rate Data*

The average monthly vacancy rate for each labor group for calendar year 2024 was below 20% and is shown in Attachment 1, Table 3. While not represented by a labor group, vacancy rate data for the City’s unrepresented mid management employees and Executives is also provided. Attachment 1, Table 4 shows the monthly vacancy rate for 2025 year to date, which has been below 20%.

### *Recruitment Data*

During 2024, Management Services (MS) staff received 525 personnel requisitions (departmental requests to fill at least one vacancy) for a total of 741 vacancies. As a result, MS staff conducted 261 separate recruitments, many of which filled multiple vacancies, particularly for temporary/seasonal positions such as Facility Attendant II, Lifeguard, Recreation Leader, Work Trainee I, and Youth Services Worker. In addition to the 261 recruitments, and as part of the City’s special recruitment plan for Police Officers, MS staff continuously recruited for Police Recruit/Police Officer – Lateral and conducted ten testing processes, resulting in 19 Police Recruits and one Police Officer lateral.

While the details of individual recruitments vary significantly, most recruitments follow this general sequence:

- **Requisition** – A department begins the hiring process by submitting a personnel requisition to MS and specifying recruitment details, including recruitment type (departmental promotional, interdepartmental promotional, or open competitive),

length of time for advertising and accepting applications, and types of testing to be utilized (written test, practical exam, supplemental questionnaire, interview panel, etc.).

- **Development of Tests** – Test procedures are developed and confirmed prior to the start of advertising.
- **Application Period** – Vacant position(s) are advertised, and applications are accepted for a specified time.
- **Initial Screening** – MS staff screens candidate applications for minimum qualifications (MQs).
- **Administration of Tests** – Qualified applicants (those who meet MQs) are invited to participate in the testing process(es).
- **Scoring of Tests** – Testing scores are compiled, and a list of qualified candidates is created and provided to the hiring department.
- **Department Interviews** – Hiring department conducts interviews and selects candidate(s).
- **Background** – MS works with the hiring department and their selected candidate(s) to complete the background, which includes a criminal records check and Department of Justice fingerprinting, the medical examination, and benefits paperwork. Once completed, a start date is determined.

In 2024, the average time to complete a recruitment, and provide a list of candidates to the hiring department for final interviews, was 69 calendar days, or approximately 2.3 months. The average length of time individual departments spend on final interviews varies across departments. Attachment 1, Table 5 further breaks down the average time to complete a recruitment process based on different types of recruitments.

#### *Background Process Data*

During 2024, MS staff completed the background process for 574 employees (backgrounds, medical exams, and benefits paperwork), including 327 new hires, 136 promotions, 52 rehires, 39 transfers, and 20 other title/position changes. The background process averaged 33 calendar days, or about a month, for all employees hired in 2024. This represents the time between the department selection and the employee's start date. About 18 calendar days on average, or about two and half weeks, were spent conducting the background and medical exam. The remainder of the time, or a little over two weeks (15 calendar days) on average was spent assisting candidates and departments with the completion of required paperwork and allowing time for other issues such as selected candidates providing notice to their current employers or salary negotiations between the selected candidate and the department.

#### *Recruitment and Retention Efforts*

The most critical and effective recruitment and retention effort is the Council's continued commitment to the City's publicly adopted compensation policy. In 2016, the City Council revised the compensation portion of the City's financial policies from an aspirational statement that "we will strive to pay competitive market compensation" to a stronger, more committed statement. The policy states that subject to the City's financial policies, and "in order to recruit and retain a well-qualified workforce to provide exceptional services, we will compensate employees at a level commensurate with the average of Burbank's relevant labor market."

Since that time, Council has worked with MS staff to ensure adherence to the City's compensation policy by approving contracts with the City's labor groups that provide competitive salaries and benefits. The City's long history of financial responsibility enabled the City to provide competitive compensation even through financial instability. For example, the City maintained appropriate compensation and did not have to consider items such as salary reductions, furloughs, or layoffs as a means of weathering the financial uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. Council's commitment to competitive wages is critical to ensuring that the City and its employees continue to provide the excellent City services that the Burbank community has come to expect.

In addition to competitive compensation, MS staff have taken steps to broaden the City's outreach to potential candidates and market the City as a desirable employer. Below is a description of these steps.

- **Job Advertisement Brochure** – Created a visually engaging brochure for job advertisements that highlights why Burbank is a great place to work, including organizational culture, benefits, community involvement, and attractive aspects of the City.
- **City of Burbank Branding and Marketing** – Strengthened the City's employer brand through active promotion on the website, LinkedIn, and social media. Enhanced LinkedIn efforts expanded regional reach, resulting in a 64% increase in followers and a 47% rise in engagement over the past year.
- **Recruitment Events** – Attend career fairs, job fairs, or college fairs on a regular basis to continually attract and engage candidates.
- **Youth Employment Programs** – Engage youth interested in local government and the community through the City Resources Employing Students Today (CREST), Burbank Employment & Student Training (BEST), and Summer Trail Enhancement Program (STEP). These programs build a future talent pipeline, ensuring Burbank remains an attractive employer for future generations.

Lastly, the City has focused on enhancing recruitment efforts for Police Recruits/Laterals. Since 2016, Council has appropriated one time funding each year to cover the cost of temporary staff and overtime in MS to assist with the additional workload associated

with running Police Recruit/Lateral recruitments up to 12 times per year. Council also approved lateral signing bonuses for Police Officers from other agencies as well as additional vacation and sick time.

#### *Recruitment Process Improvements*

Over the last couple of years, MS staff have implemented several initiatives designed to improve the recruitment process, targeted at streamlining the process for departments and improving the candidate experience.

- **Electronic Requisitions** – Digitized the requisition process using NEOGOV, allowing departments to submit and approve requests online. This eliminates paper workflows for requisitions and accelerates the start of recruitments.
- **Automated MQ Scoring** – Introduced supplemental questions in NEOGOV to automatically screen for MQs, reducing manual review time and expediting initial candidate evaluations.
- **Ongoing Candidate Pool (OCP)** – Piloted with BCEA, this system creates a standing pool of qualified clerical candidates available to multiple departments at any time, minimizing recruitment delays for high-turnover roles.
- **TestGenius In-Time Testing** – Enables candidates to complete written exams online at their convenience, reducing scheduling delays and offering greater flexibility.
- **Spark Hire In-Time Interviews** – Offers one-way, remote video interviews that candidates complete on their own schedule, removing scheduling barriers and increasing participation.
- **Fully Remote Testing for Hard-to-Fill Positions** – For roles such as Communications Operator, all testing phases—written, practical, and oral—are conducted online, expediting the process and broadening candidate access. Staff are working to expand this model to additional recruitments.
- **Automated Candidate Communication (SMS)** – Sends text message updates at key stages of the recruitment process to keep candidates informed, reduce follow-up inquiries, and improve engagement.
- **NEOGOV Onboarding Portal** – Centralizes onboarding tasks such as document submission and benefits enrollment into one digital platform, improving efficiency and reducing paperwork.
- **Expanded Live Scan and Medical Facilities** – Increased the number of available fingerprinting and medical exam locations to accommodate candidates who live outside Burbank and offer more scheduling flexibility.
- **Future Enhancement – ioPredict (TestGenius) Integration** – Will introduce a library of validated, job-specific written exams administered online, giving candidates flexibility and allowing departments to move forward more quickly.

### *Challenges in the Hiring Process*

The most significant challenge in the hiring process is that the City's human resources software systems are not integrated with each other and/or are reaching the end of their useful life. As a result, many processes are manual or require workarounds due to system gaps.

The City's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, which is the backbone financial and human resources software that touches every employee, is over 25 years old and reaching the end of its life. NEOGOV, the City's recruitment software, does not connect with the ERP, which requires MS and department staff to manually remove or recreate data from NEOGOV to input into the ERP. This manual process is time consuming and forces MS staff to spend time ensuring the process runs as smoothly as possible instead of on value-added tasks such as training department staff on how to more effectively recruit for their vacancies.

MS staff have implemented several process improvements, as discussed above, but are limited in the ability to overhaul processes until a new ERP system is implemented. As part of the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget, staff have included a multi-year funding plan to replace the City's ERP system over the next few years. This project will ultimately enable the City to modernize its hiring processes. MS will continue to work with the City's Information Technology Department to identify opportunities to enhance operational efficiencies.

Additionally, MS has benefited from the Council's previous approval of additional staff to support the City's hiring process. Over the last ten years, the number of requisitions processed by MS staff more than doubled, but until recently, the number of staff stayed stagnant. Staffing levels presented a significant challenge in keeping up with the volume of recruitments. However, Council approved the addition of two fulltime positions in the FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget specifically to support recruitment and additional position upgrades have been included in the FY 2025-26 Proposed Budget to ensure increased stability and efficiency on the City's recruitment team.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This activity has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and as such, is not a "project" subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) 14 Cal. Code Regs § 15378.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

**CONCLUSION**

This report presents workforce, vacancy rate, and recruitment data, in compliance with AB 2561, as well as background data. It also showcases the Council's and staff's ongoing work to ensure that the City can recruit and retain a well-qualified workforce to provide the high-quality services the Burbank community expects. The work discussed in this report directly contributes to the Council's goals under City Services (recruit and retain high caliber employees) and Public Safety (maintain staffing of police and fire departments and increase appropriately as the City grows).

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1 – City of Burbank Workforce and Recruitment Data  
Correspondences