Recruitment and retention in local government post-COVID -
*Employer and employee trends to keep in mind for hiring, negotiating and retaining executive and management positions*

by *Peckham & McKenney Executive Search*

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“I want to know what I am competing with and make sure to offer something comparable that other cities are also offering their employees.”

Who are we to answer this?

Briefly About Us

• Peckham & McKenney is a well-known boutique executive search firm based in Roseville, CA that prides itself on the placement of diversity candidates, customer service, communications, direct outreach, and personalization of every search for long-lasting placements.

• Each Peckham & McKenney recruiter limits her/his number of concurrent searches order to learn about and represent our client municipalities exceptionally well and personally outreach and connect with applicants for successful placements. Each search effort is individually tailored to our client’s interests and as such, we do not recycle applicants among searches.

• Our recruiting team are retired city professionals with expertise in all aspects of city management and public safety.

• While we have conducted searches throughout the western states, we are primarily focused on California, and we only serve cities, counties and special districts.
Hiring Landscape

Very difficult and competitive

1. COVID – candidates don’t want to relocate / desire to telecommute
2. Many positions
   1. Retirements have caused openings
   2. COVID is over; individuals are tired and want something new/different
3. Pool of applicants small
   1. Lack of training, experience and seasoning that the agency wants or is willing to accept
   2. Lack of longevity in prior positions that the agency wants or is willing to accept
   3. Social media presence and background checks are not consistent with what the agency is willing to accept
4. Agencies are not desired by applicants
   1. Candidates look at organization (including elected officials) for stability, civility, leadership, culture, professionalism
   2. Agency must be an attractive, welcoming and inviting organization / culture / environment
5. Candidates have multiple applications and job offers
   1. Employees also are not committed to longevity in the position
6. Salaries, benefits (including CalPERS formula) and work / life balance need to be competitive
   1. Post COVID, candidates do not want to relocate and / or desire to telecommute
   2. Candidates are not driven by benefits
7. Application and selection process is slow
8. There are internal candidates
Hiring Landscape
Attractions and positives for applicants
when making a choice where to apply AND
when accepting a position

1. Ease and expeditious process
2. Salary and compensation (and something to compensate for lower CalPERS benefit)
3. Job satisfaction and challenges
4. Work / life balance
5. Organizational culture, support and engagement in DEI
6. In support of DEI, acceptance of an unconventional backgrounds and requirements
7. Willingness to accept shorter tenures
8. Organizational culture, values and leadership
9. Remote working
10. Relocations/communicating
11. Political environment, council dynamics, civility
Tips for Hiring and Retention Success

1. Be open to the #2 or #3 candidate
2. Offer top of range
3. Provide for some level of remote working / telecommuting
4. Streamline application process
5. Eliminate accrual of vacation leave and offer unlimited leave on request (eliminates unfunded liability)
6. Train
   1. Train internal staff
   2. Train the newly hired individual
7. Hire from within
8. Welcome and encourage diversity
9. Address benefits such as transferring leave banks
10. Don’t expect long tenures
This was reviewed in August 2021 and is up-to-date.

The stock market has reached all-time highs and the economy in general continues to be strong. In this scenario, many public sector employers are hiring. Although this is certainly a news story, hiring the process itself can be very challenging, often causing budget stress.

The following are areas of the hiring process in the public sector that deserve particular attention from a legal perspective. This is not an exhaustive list of such areas, or a complete list of considerations, but it provides a general framework for what to trouble-shoot before hiring begins or expands.

1. **Unfair Accurate Job Descriptions**: At the very outset of the hiring process, it is critical to develop accurate and sufficiently detailed job descriptions. These will prove important not only for hiring, but also for legal issues that may arise later during the course of the employment relationship. An accurate job description will help the agency


### Trouble-Shooting the Hiring Process for a Public Agency

By David Upton on August 3, 2021

**The Guardian** 2/7/2022

2/12/2022 - Trouble-Shooting the Hiring Process for a Public Agency - recruitment, agency life, Samarion

### California Public Agency Labor & Employment Blog

**USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NAVIGATING LEGAL CHALLENGES**

**Career Compass No. 95: Use Return-to-Office As Your Opportunity to Reset Culture**

Dear Friend:

I’m the HR manager in a southwestern city. I ran a team of 16 HR directors from across all departments. We were tasked by the CEO to find the best strategy for designing our return-to-office approach as the pandemic becomes more manageable. It is clear that we will be offering some kind of hybrid model of work, although work from home part of the week.

However, the team is struggling with a whole array of other issues, such as:

- What decision will any of the HR leaders work from home?
- Should we do away with vaccination mandates and other safety protocols?
- What is the best way to manage employees when a supervisor may not see (except virtually) most of the week?
- How do we enhance collaboration among teams in a hybrid/stable/critical?

As we look to develop return-to-office policies, many of our managers are pushing us to “just let us re-open.” As an employee, that slogan is illustrative and exhaustive: they are trying to maintain productivity and deal with workers they don’t see in person.

As an HR leader in an office a certain number of managers are basically telling employees “just deal with it.”

### Many resources about the job market

Many resources about the job market
Thank You

Questions?