

Merit System Services

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Governor Gavin Newsom
Secretary, Government Operations Agency Amy Tong
Director Eraina Ortega

November 1, 2024

Coral Ferrin
Personnel Director
County of Tehama
727 Oak Street
Red Bluff, CA 96080

Re: Tehama County Interagency Merit System Request for Conversion to Approved Local Merit Systems

Dear Ms. Ferrin,

This letter serves to notify you of the completion of the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) Merit System Services (MSS) review of Tehama County's request to convert from an Interagency Merit System (IMS) to an Approved Local Merit System (ALMS) and issuance of a determination.

Pursuant to section 17012 of the regulations implementing the revised Federal Grant-in-Aid Merit System Requirements known as the Local Agency Personnel Standards (LAPS), at the request of Tehama County, MSS reviewed the personnel system against merit standards. The review of Tehama County's personnel system included, but was not limited to, the county's personnel rules, policies and procedures, personnel practices, narrative responses to questions, employee appointment and performance evaluation documentation, compensation reports, master salary schedule, training records, and disciplinary actions.

After reviewing the information submitted, it has been determined that Tehama County has provided sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the six federal merit system principles. The request to convert to an Approved Local Merit System (ALMS) county has been conditionally approved.

As a condition of the conditional approval of Tehama County's ALMS conversion, the chief executive or head of Tehama County must sign and return the attached delegation agreement to CalHR.

Please work with MSS staff to develop a plan to ensure a smooth transition for all involved.

If you should have any questions or need clarification after reviewing the Report of Findings, you may contact Alysa Stockdale-Hollis, Merit System Services Program Manager, via email at Alysa.Stockdale-Hollis@calhr.ca.gov.

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Sincerely,

Alysa Stockdale-Hollis

Alysa Stockdale-Hollis
MSS Program Manager
California Department of Human Resources

Attachments:

- Delegation Agreement Understanding of Delegated Personnel Responsibilities between MSS and the County of Tehama
- County of Tehama Transition Plan

Cc: Tonya Moore, Child Support Services Director
Laura Hawkins, Social Services Director

Delegation Agreement

Understanding of Delegated Personnel Responsibilities between MSS and the County of Tehama

For all parts of this agreement, the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) and Merit System Services (MSS) shall be referred to as MSS, and the County of Tehama shall be referred to as COUNTY.

Pursuant to Government Code section 19800, the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR), Merit System Services (MSS) is responsible for ensuring that local government agencies, which receive state and federal funding for Social Services and Child Support Services programs, adhere to federal merit system standards when a merit system of employment is mandated.

Pursuant to Government Code section 19803 and the California Local Agency Personnel Standards (LAPS) section 17405, MSS has the authority to delegate, share or transfer various personnel systems programs responsibilities to local agencies. This enables local agencies to create their own Approved Local Merit System while complying with regulations, policies, and federal requirements.

Upon execution of this agreement, the COUNTY has been granted conditional authority and partial responsibility by MSS to administer its personnel system to govern the employment of program employees, conditionally designating it as an Approved Local Merit System. This agreement outlines the COUNTY's reporting requirements, responsibilities, obligations, and expectations, ensuring that the county understands its role concerning this agreement.

According to the authority, the COUNTY may independently conduct all personnel activities for program positions and classifications within its classification plan, except for those classifications specified in the attached transition plan. MSS will continue to manage the personnel system for those identified classifications until the COUNTY completes the necessary job analyses and examination development. The COUNTY must ensure that its personnel system consistently complies with federal requirements. The COUNTY will have authority and responsibility to complete the following items for its personnel system operations:

- Examination plans
- Job analysis studies
- Examination development
- Validation studies
- Examination bulletins and advertisements
- Application review procedures
- Minimum qualifications determinations
- Examination administration
- Examination Scoring
- Establishment of eligible lists
- Procedures for documenting examination processes
- Procedures for retaining examination records

- Responses to examination appeals (if applicable)
- Responses to compliance reviews
- Procedures and rules for employee recruitment, selection, and advancement
- Compensation policies and procedures
- Training policies and practices
- Performance evaluation standards and procedures, including procedures for correcting and disciplining employees for poor performance
- Overall fairness of the Personnel System, including policies regarding equal employment opportunity and discrimination
- Rules regarding conflicts of interest including rules protecting employees from coercion for partisan political purposes and prohibiting employees from using their authority to interfere with actions of other relating to elections

Job Analysis Requirements

The COUNTY shall conduct job analysis studies to support the development of reliable and valid civil service examinations. Job analyses shall adhere to the legal and professional standards, including the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection. Job analyses must have been validated within the preceding five (5) years. The COUNTY shall ensure the following elements are included in the job analysis studies:

1. Must be performed for the classification for which the subsequent examination is developed and used.
2. The methodology utilized must be described and thoroughly documented.
3. Final data from the job analysis must be presented in writing (i.e., job analysis report).
4. Job analysis data should be collected from various current sources (e.g., literature review, incumbent input, supervisor input).
5. The sample size and group of subject matter expert participants in the data collection activities must be representative of the jobs within the job classification for which the Job analysis is conducted and sufficient to yield adequate data.
6. Job tasks must be specified in terms of their importance or criticality, frequency or performance, and determination of the essential job tasks.
7. Job tasks must be sufficiently detailed to derive the requisite Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs).
8. The importance of critical KSAs required upon entry for successful job performance must be specified.
9. The KSAs must be operationally defined; for example, the general KSA "typing skill" should be expanded to "skill to type general business correspondence at a rate of no less than 60 words per minute using a computer and word processing software up to six hours per day".
10. There must be a linkage between the essential tasks and their importance, the required upon-entry KSAs and the classification specification KSAs.

Examination Requirements

The COUNTY shall ensure that the examination developed shall be competitive and such character as fairly to test and determine the qualifications, fitness, and ability of competitors to perform the duties of the classification or position. In addition, the COUNTY shall conduct validation studies to document the data collection, examination development, and pass point

setting methodologies to defend their civil service examinations legally. Validation studies shall adhere to the legal and professional standards, including the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection. Final data from the examination development must be presented in writing (i.e., Validation report).

All examinations shall meet MSS selection standards of validity and job-relatedness through linkage to a valid job analysis. Further, the merit selection process requires that the examination tool and job-related rating criteria be developed before reviewing or examining any individual application.

Job Posting Requirements

The COUNTY shall advertise the examination method, process, and length of eligibility on the job posting in addition to the requirements outlined in CCR 17032 Recruitment and Selection of Program Employees. Once advertised, the county is prohibited from modifying the selection process listed on the job posting.

The COUNTY will notify MSS via email at MSSLeadership@calhr.ca.gov to inform MSS of any posted job vacancies. The subject line of the email should include the phrase "Job Advertisement – Classification", and within the body the job advertisement link.

Continuous Recruitments Requirements

The COUNTY shall utilize the same examination for the duration of the recruitment for job posting advertised as continuous. As a best practice, advertisements for continuous recruitment should not exceed 12 months.

Eligibility List Requirements

The COUNTY shall establish an eligible list based on a competitive examination, which shall remain valid for the specified time or until the list is exhausted.

Interview Requirements

The COUNTY shall consider all candidates on the eligible list for interview. Secondary screening may be used to screen out candidates on the eligible list to identify an interview pool. The county shall clearly document any secondary screening methods used, the criteria, the job-relatedness, and how they were applied.

Evaluating Minimum Qualifications

The COUNTY shall review and evaluate each candidate's education and experience listed on the application to determine if the candidate meets the minimum qualifications (MQs) or entrance requirements of the examination. In addition, the COUNTY is responsible for verifying the education and experience of the selected candidate(s) and verifying that MQs are met before appointment to a program position.

Training

The COUNTY is responsible for providing appropriate training for staff performing human

resources-related functions, including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, job analysis, examination development, pass point setting, and best practices for hiring, as well as other professional personnel practices, based on the county's policies, processes, procedures, and needs.

MSS reserves the right to require county employees to attend additional training for failure to adhere to any requirements in this agreement or based on adverse compliance review findings.

Maintaining an Approved Local Merit System

The COUNTY is responsible for ensuring that its personnel system operates according to the information reviewed and approved by MSS (CCR §17012 (c)). If the county wants to change or implement a new policy, standard, or procedure for its personnel system, it must notify MSS for approval (CCR §17012 (e) and §17210 (b)). Additionally, the county is expected to stay informed about current laws, rules, regulations, policies, and updates established by MSS to ensure its personnel system complies with MSS standards. These changes are communicated through memorandums and town hall meetings.

Records Retention

The COUNTY must keep accurate records of its personnel management system decisions and related human resources records in accordance with the county's policy on records retention. If the county doesn't have a specific policy, then it should retain records for seven (7) years from the action date or the date of the employee's separation, whichever is longer (CCR §17012 (g) and §170220).

Compliance Audits

The COUNTY is subject to audits of its personnel management system by MSS to ensure compliance with federal requirements. The scope and frequency of these audits are at the discretion of MSS pursuant to CCR §17012 (h).

Notification of County Management Change

The COUNTY agrees to notify MSS in the event of a change in their organization's management. If any of the signatories from the previously submitted agreement have changed, the COUNTY must notify MSS within 30 days of the change. Notification may be made via email to MSSLeadership@calhr.ca.gov informing MSS of the specific management change. In the email subject line, include the phrase: "Change in Management".

The COUNTY agrees to act as the agent of MSS for personnel functions performed under this agreement and recognizes MSS as the final arbiter of issues related to delegated responsibilities. The COUNTY accepts responsibility for fostering a positive working relationship with MSS based on cooperation and open communication.

MSS reserves the right to revise, cancel or impose additional restrictions on the terms of this agreement if the county repeatedly or significantly violates it. MSS also reserves the right to terminate this agreement, either in whole or in parts, at its discretion upon providing the COUNTY with reasonable advance written notice.

MSS will be responsible for maintaining and updating this agreement, which may be revised as circumstances change during the agreement period.

This agreement is effective upon signature and remains in effect for one (1) year, unless terminated as provided.

The County agrees to comply with the requirements outlined in this agreement. The County understands that failure to comply with the conditions of this agreement may lead to a reduction or removal of the county's ALMS conditional authority to manage personnel.

The signatures below indicate both parties' acknowledgement, acceptance and adherence to the terms and conditions of this agreement.

County of Tehama Personnel Director/Designee

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Merit System Services Program Manager/Designee

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Tehama County ALMS Transition Plan

Objective

This transition plan outlines the strategy for transferring authority and responsibility from the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) and Merit System Services (MSS) to The County of Tehama (County). The primary goal is to establish the County as an Approved Local Merit System (ALMS), enabling independent administration of its personnel system for program employees. A key objective is to complete comprehensive job analyses and develop targeted examinations for classifications utilized to fill program positions within the County’s classification plan.

MSS Responsibilities

MSS will maintain personnel oversight and selection activities for the following classifications until Tehama County has conducted thorough job analyses and created the corresponding examinations:

Account Clerk I/II/III	Account Clerk Supervisor
Child Support Program Manager	Child Support Specialist
Child Support Supervisor	Eligibility Specialist I/II/III
Eligibility Trainee	Eligibility Supervisor
Employment and Training Worker I/II/III	Employment and Training Worker Supervisor
Fair Hearing Officer	Information Systems Analyst I/II
Information Systems Supervisor	Information Systems Technician
Legal Clerk I/II	Office Assistant I/II/III
Office Assistant Supervisor I/II	Program Manager
Screeners	Secretary III
Social Services Aide	Social Worker I/II/III
Social Worker IV (A/B)	Social Worker Supervisor I/II
Staff Services Analyst I/II	Supervising Staff Services Analyst

Upon notification by the County of the completion of a job analysis and examination development, MSS will remove classifications from the list above and delegate personnel operations to the County.

Tehama County Responsibilities

The County must conduct thorough job analysis studies to develop reliable and valid civil service examinations. These analyses shall adhere to all legal and professional standards, including the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection. Additionally, the County must ensure that all examinations are competitive and fairly assess candidates’ qualifications, fitness and relative knowledge, skills, and abilities for each specific classification or position. Upon completion of a job analysis and examination development for any classification identified above, the County will notify MSS.

To ensure compliance with MSS standards, the County must include the following key elements in the job analysis and examination development process:

Conduct Comprehensive Job Analysis

1. **Scope of Analysis:** The job analysis must be performed specifically for the classification for which subsequent examinations will be developed.
2. **Collect Diverse Data:** Job Analysis data should be collected from various sources, including:
 - Literature Review: Review existing materials related to job functions and industry standards.
 - Incumbent Input: Gather insights from current employees who perform the job.
 - Supervisor Input: Collect perspectives from supervisors who directly oversee incumbents.
3. **Representative Sample Size:** The sample size and group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) participating in the data collection activities must be representative of the job classification being analyzed to yield reliable data.
4. **Job Task Specification:** Job tasks must be clearly specified regarding their importance, frequency of performance and identification of essential job tasks.
5. **Detailing Job Tasks:** Job tasks must be sufficiently detailed to derive the Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and other characteristics (KSAO's), ensuring that all relevant competencies are captured.
6. **Critical KSAOs Identification:** Identify the critical KSAOs required for successful job performance upon entry.
7. **Operationally Define KSAOs:** KSAOs must be operationally defined. For example:
 - General KSAO: "Typing skill"
 - Operational definition: "Ability to type general business correspondence at a rate of no less than 60 words per minute using a computer and word processing software for up to six hours per day."
8. **Link Tasks and KSAOs:** There must be a clear linkage between the essential tasks and their importance, required upon-entry KSAOs, and the KSAOs specified in the classification specification.
9. **Methodology Documentation:** Clearly describe and thoroughly document the methodology utilized in the job analysis to ensure transparency.
10. **Job Analysis Report:** Compile final data from the job analysis and present it in a written format, creating a comprehensive report that summarizes findings and methodologies.

11. **Existing Job Analyses:** If Tehama County has participated in any previous county-wide job analysis processes with MSS, MSS will provide the completed job analysis reports for those classifications to streamline efforts.

Examination Development

1. Develop Competitive Examinations

- Create examinations for specified classifications that are competitive and fairly assess candidates' qualifications, fitness, and abilities.
- Process:
 - **Job Analysis Review:** Utilize the results of the comprehensive job analyses to identify the KSAOs necessary for each classification.
 - **Examination Format:** Determine the most appropriate examination format (e.g., written, T&E, oral interviews, etc.) based on the identified KSAOs.
 - **Item Development:** Develop examination items that accurately reflect the required competencies.
 - **Pilot Testing:** If applicable, conduct pilot tests with a representative sample of candidates to evaluate the clarity and effectiveness of examination items. Collect feedback for revisions.
 - **Finalization:** Finalize the examination content to ensure it aligns with the job requirements and fairly assesses all candidates.

2. Validation Studies:

- Ensure that examinations are legally defensible and meet professional standards.
- Validation Process:
 - **Methodologies Documentation:** Clearly outline the methodologies used for data collection, including sampling methods and demographic information.
 - **Content Validity:** Ensure that examinations items represent critical job aspects by consulting SMEs during the development phase.
 - **Pass Point Setting Methodologies:** Employ standard-setting methods, (e.g., Angoff method, etc.) to determine passing scores, documenting the rationale to ensure transparency.

3. **Documentation of Findings:** Prepare comprehensive written validation reports that summarize the findings from examination development, including methodologies, analyses, and recommendations.

4. **Linkage to Job Analysis:** All examinations must meet MSS selection standards for validity and job-relatedness by being directly linked to a valid job analysis.

5. **Merit Selection Process:** The development of examination tools and job-related rating criteria must occur prior before the review or examination of any individual applications to ensure an unbiased selection process.

Timeline

This transition plan will be in place for a period of twelve (12) months or until the County has completed the job analyses and examination development for all identified classifications.

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