

Erie County Department of Human Resources

2008 Annual Report

ERIE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Margaret C. Rudolph, Director

Maria Rupert, Loss Control Coordinator

Matthew Wilson, Human Resources Officer

Katherine Mears, Secretary

Erie County Department of Human Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT – 2008

Margaret C. Rudolph, Director

2008 Employment

Opportunities/Information/Statistics

The Human Resources Department assists the County Administrator, Commissioners, elected officials and boards in the areas of human resource management. In addition to recruitment and hiring functions, the Human Resources Department administers the employee benefit program, safety and loss control program, the employee orientation and on-going training programs. The Director takes the lead in employee and labor relations, collective bargaining negotiation and administration, and compliance with various State and Federal regulations, as well as County policy. The Human Resources Department continued to review practices in order to better accommodate our customers and determined several goals for 2008:

- **HR / WORKERS COMP TRAINING:** The Loss Control Coordinator and Human Resources Officer completed a full-day training in order to provide an “HR and W/C 101” style seminar. Trainers provided a guided walk-through of processes and forms which are routed through the HR office. A “client” satisfaction survey was completed within 30 days of the seminar; overall ratings were high – very high.
- **COUNTY-WIDE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS:** As requested by the Board of Commissioners and County Administrator; organizational charts were completed by each elected official and department, were collected and placed in one consistent format. Organizational chart books were completed and an annual update is scheduled upon final approval of the 2009 budget.
- **PANDEMIC PLAN and DRUG FREE WORKPLACE POLICY:** First, the Loss Control Coordinator has worked closely with officials of the Erie County Health Department in order to craft an appropriate and prudent plan without inducing a panic state. The plan is adaptable as conditions and warnings, originated from Federal agencies, change. The plan can be implemented upon notice from Health officials. Secondly, the Drug Free Workplace Policy, in need of major overhaul, has been completed in draft form and is ready to move to the next step of discussion with the various departments and employee groups affected by the policy. Both of these items will continue into 2009.
- **PERSONNEL FILES:** All of the Board of Commissioners departments’ personnel files were moved to the Human Resources office in 2008. Prior to this transition, there were 66 files house in the office, there are now over 360. While the files are centrally located, there is no standard format and thus, 2009 will be a challenging year to organize the files into one system. Further, the department will be reviewing all paperless solutions in order to streamline the filing process and provide for a more secure environment for the storage of files and records.

- 2,445 Applications Received/Logged
- 49 Employment Opportunities Posted
- 124 Motor Vehicle Registrations Confirmed
- 101 Arrest Records Checked
- 143 Physical Exams/Drug Screens Arranged
- 72 Web Checks Performed
- 69 New Employees Hired

On average, there were 696 employees enrolled in the health insurance plan in 2008; 171 with single plans and 525 with family plans.

Safety/Loss Control/Worker’s Compensation

- 49 Workers’ Compensation claims filed
 - *Actual medical costs = \$ 39,857.00*
- 7 CORSA Claims Filed
 - *Total Costs = \$ 41,745.56 (includes \$ 8,056.52 in County paid deductibles)*
- 6 Non-CORSA claim events – County damage to 3rd party
 - *Total Costs = \$ 5,270.37 in damages*

Safety training sessions conducted throughout 2008 for Erie County employees included:

- W/C Training for supervisors, department heads and elected officials
- 5-Hour Electrical Course
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Forklift Refresher
- Hazwoper Refresher
- OSHA 10-hour for Construction and General Industry

In order to streamline training costs, employees from other municipalities were invited to attend several of the trainings. Additionally, training was coordinated with the Sandusky Area Safety Council.

Other 2008 Accomplishments:

- Safety audits conducted throughout most Erie County facilities
- Served as Board Member of Sandusky Area Safety Council
- Served as member of County Loss Control Coordinators Association
- Continued maintaining and overseeing Retrospective Rating Program for Workers’ Compensation by maintaining a close relationship with the County’s managed care organization, third-party administrator and outside legal counsel.

LABOR RELATIONS / COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Negotiations with Job & Family Services and AFSCME Local 3616 began in early 2008 for a successor agreement. The unit, representing approximately 82 employees, brought multiple issues to the table and talks stalled after approximately 60 days. A Fact-finder, mutually selected by the parties, divided many of the issues between the parties and crafted some very difficult language in terms of additional personal time. Further, a 3% across the board increase was granted which will have severe financial impact on the agency. By the Board not acting on the fact-finder's report, it was deemed accepted and implemented retroactive to the contract expiration date.

Negotiations with the Erie County Sheriff's office and the FOP began with four (4) units – Dep / Sgts / Lts; Corrections; Communications; and, Secretaries. The talks were completed at the end of the year by scheduling a fact-finding session for early 2009.

HEALTH BENEFITS

The Board of Erie County Commissioners provides employee health insurance benefits through a self-funded plan administered by the Human Resources Department. The Health Trust Fund enjoyed a particularly healthy year and was able to substantially increase its reserve. The Cost Containment and Wellness Committee established goals and objectives in which to focus activities. A new consulting firm was selected through a competitive RFP process. The Wellness Health Incentive Program (WHIP) continued its outstanding Individual Health Assessment program to assist employees in monitoring their health and to encourage healthier lifestyles. These activities are just a highlight of the overall Cost Containment and Wellness Committee programming efforts. An extremely successful Health & Wellness Fair was held in November 2008, in which local vendors, the County's benefits administrator, and the Erie County Health Department provided information and services to employees and their dependents.

MEMBERSHIPS / CERTIFICATIONS

The Director continued active participation in the Ohio Public Employer's Labor Relations Association (OhPELRA) and maintained certification as a Certified Labor Relations Professional (CLRP) through the National Public Employer's Labor Relations Association. OhPELRA and the National organization provide incredible networking opportunities where information can be shared among human resources and labor relations professionals as well as legal counsel. Additional memberships included the Society for Human Resources Management for the Human Resources Officer and the Loss Control Coordinator participated in the Loss Control Coordinator's Association and the Sandusky Area Safety Council.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Department strives to create open channels of communication. Information is distributed via email, employee mailings, the intranet and employee meetings. We continue to coordinate Wellness Days, flu shots and immunizations in cooperation with the Erie County Health Department, the annual employee picnic, Christmas Potluck, and employee recognition events as well as other events as needed.

EMPLOYEE STATISTICS

The Human Resource Department, in conjunction with the Auditor's Office / Payroll, monitors EEO and Affirmative Action plans and assists the Auditor's Department in completing Federal and State EEO Reports. For annual reporting purposes, Erie County employment statistics for Erie County for 2008, as provided by the Auditor's Office, including all departments and agencies in the County are as follows:

Total Employees: 1049 (894 FT / 155 PT)
Total Minority Employees: 90 (8.5% of Total Ees)

It is noted that this number has fallen below the preferred level of 10%. With known workforce reductions in several departments and the reinstatement of the attrition policy in 2008, this statistic will continue to be monitored so that any changes in recruitment policy can be implemented as necessary to increase the number of minority employees to appropriately represent our County's population.

Department of Human Resources: 2008 Goals

- Establish an HR Department Mission Statement which clearly defines our department's vision on performing the HR and Loss Control function
- Finish Pandemic Plan
- Re-institute the County Line newsletter
- With the guidance and assistance of the Information Technology department, establish an employee only section of the County web site
- Produce and maintain an employee directory
- Review / revise the entire selection policy including pre-employment, post-offer background checks, drug screens and physicals
- Prepare a consistent format for organizational charts for all County agencies and maintain the same in Human Resources
- Provide Training Opportunities
 - Supervisory Training
 - FMLA
 - Interviewing Techniques
 - Effective Performance Evaluations
 - Personnel Policy Review

2008 Goals and Objectives

Goal	Assigned	Status	Follow-Up
HR and Workers Comp Training Program for Department Heads / Elected Officials and Office Administrators	Loss Control Coordinator and Human Resources Officer	Completed; A full-day training was held in order to provide an "HR and W/C 101" style seminar. Trainers provided a guided walk-through of processes and forms which are routed through the HR Office.	A "client" satisfaction survey was completed within 30 days of the seminar; overall ratings were high very high; will provide annual update to this training.
Employee Communications / Reinstate County Newsletter	Director; staff	<p>The <i>County Line</i>, an employee newsletter, was ended in 2004 due to budgetary constraints. The HR office would like to see it reinstated and would like to follow a model from Wood Co., in which a multi-dept. committee prepares the newsletter. All departments / offices are working short staffed thus, organizing this committee has hit some walls. Efforts will continue; budgetary concerns could be alleviated by providing an electronic only newsletter.</p> <p><i>Health Bits</i>, a quarterly health and wellness newsletter, is prepared by the Education / Wellness Sub-Committee and the HR Director and has received general positive support.</p>	Will continue to work with IT department in development of intranet and employee only access to the web site in order to create a newsletter link / download that is accessible to all employees.
Finish Pandemic Plan	Loss Control Coordinator; Director	Loss Control Coordinator worked closely with Health Department officials in determining an appropriate and prudent but not panic inducing plan so that our operations are not impaired by any mass pandemic or emergency. Draft plan is ready for implementation.	Plan continues to be monitored and updated as per federal and state guidelines. Many items are under continuous review by Dept of Health and CDC officials. Loss Control Coordinator will continue to monitor / update.

Employee Directory	HR Staff	HR office received several requests / suggestions to create an employee directory that each department could easily access in determining how to locate a particular employee or service. HR office utilizes a fairly comprehensive HR software package that allows easy access by name and department; HR Staff is currently reviewing software to determine if a more cost-effective / efficient alternative exists OR can be created via another software program.	Will continue to be monitored in 2009; including budgetary considerations for renewing current software package.
County-wide organizational charts	HR Director	Requested by the Board and Administrator; org charts were completed by each elected official and department and represented every possible format. All charts were collected and placed in one consistent format.	Charts will continue to be monitored; Director will work with IT in order to create an "auto-fill" form in which department heads / elected officials can provide instant updating to their respective departments.
Pre-Employment Screening	HR Staff	HR staff determined that pre-employment screening options needed to be reviewed and updated. Initial concern was length of time between testing and results. An alternative was determined which provided instant results at a lower cost for a better service to our clients. Job descriptions are continuing to be reviewed for pre-employment physical requirements. Drug Screens will continue.	Personnel Policy Review Committee has been briefed on this issue and will continue to review in 2009 for potential updates.

Erie County Department of Human Resources - Department Function

Shall serve the internal and external customers of Erie County by:

- ***By providing exceptional service in recruiting and retention efforts.***
 - Department staff utilizes a standard formatting process for all position descriptions, advertisements for recruitment, and application process. All applicants greeted and treated with dignity and respect.
 - Department staff will assist department head and / or appointing authority with the development of an appropriate interview format, including questions and skill-based pre-employment testing. Department participates in interviews as requested and / or required.
 - Department staff will schedule and follow-up with all pre-employment testing, including criminal background checks, fingerprinting, motor vehicle checks, drug and alcohol screenings, and physicals / fit-for-duty examinations.
 - Department staff will provide support and guidance on personnel processing, including all required employment paperwork as well as a thorough orientation process.

- ***By providing exceptional service in fringe and health benefits explanations and processing.***
 - Department staff will enroll all new employees in the health benefits program and assist with all new forms, cards, and explanation of benefits.
 - Department staff will serve as liaison between employees and benefits administrators in order to clarify benefits, resolve disputes and adjust any inaccuracies.
 - Department staff will continuously review benefits levels to determine inadequacies and / or discrepancies between plan(s). Erie County benefits are provided to Erie County employees regardless of affiliation or position. Full-time and part-time benefits levels may vary pursuant to statutory requirements.
 - Department staff will provide consistent and frequent communications regarding benefits, wellness programming and health education through a variety of methods.

- ***By providing a continuous support functions.***
 - Department staff will assist department heads with personnel matters including disciplinary and promotional processes; performance evaluations; salary surveys and compensation analysis.
 - Department staff will assist with conflict resolution and mediation for employee relations.
 - Department staff will assist with federal and state regulatory interpretation including the Fair Labor Standards Act, Family and Medical Leave Act, COBRA and the Public Employees Risk Reduction Program.

- ***By mitigating risk and ensuring effective liability prevention programs.***
 - Department staff will provide on-site safety audits on a regular and frequent basis and provide comprehensive, written recommendations on rules / programs violated and corrective action needed.
 - Department staff will provide continuous support to injured-on-the-job employees by assisting with the interpretation of complex state workers' compensation programs and facilitating a swift recovery and return to work.
 - Department staff will serve as direct liaison between the County's liability and managed care consultants as well as the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation in order to effectively manage active and inactive claims and control costs to the greatest extent possible.

- ***By maintaining positive labor relations.***
 - Department staff will honor and adhere to previously negotiated provisions of the County's collective bargaining agreements and will work with labor representatives to foster a mutual gains environment.
 - Department staff will regularly meet and openly discuss areas of concern or disparity and work to resolve differences in a fair and expeditious manner.
 - Department staff will provide open communication on upcoming programs and developments in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.