

**Department of Human Resources
2025 Budget Statement to the City Council
Committee on Budget and Government Operations
Commissioner Sandra Blakemore**

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Chairman Ervin, Vice Chairman Lee, and members of the City Council. I am Sandra Blakemore, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Thank you for allowing me to join you today to present and discuss the 2025 budget request for the Department of Human Resources.

The mission for the Department of Human Resources is to provide an inclusive and equitable employment process and work environment for our over 31,000 City employees. DHR collaborates with 44 Local Unions who represent 90% of our employees. DHR is a partner to the City's operating departments in hiring, labor relations, training, and employment policies.

The Department of Human Resources is composed of four divisions – Employment Services, Compliance, Strategic Planning & Administration, and Policy & Labor Relations. We have a diverse staff composed of 52% Black, 20% Hispanic, 24% White, and 4% Asian employees.

DHR's Employment Services division works together with Departments in hiring talent for the City's operations. The Department of Human Resources recruiters promote City employment at community job fairs, screen applications, and create referral lists for Departments. DHR's employment services division has screened and processed 162,394 applications YTD through October. In partnership with operating departments, DHR hired 4,424 employees 2024 YTD through October.

Our Compliance Division oversees the Disability Office and the Equal Employment Opportunity Office. We have strengthened our capabilities in the Disability Office with a new Disability Officer and increased staffing. The Disability Office has managed 1,037 accommodation requests this year. Our EEO Division investigated 147 complaints in 2024 YTD through October. In 2024, DHR instituted mandatory EEO training for all City employees. By November 15th, all City employees would have had EEO training.

Our Strategic Planning and Administration division oversees the Department's budget, information services, workforce development, and training. The workforce development section partners with City departments to create new on-ramps for City employment. In partnership with the Department of Streets and Sanitation, LIUNA 1001, CPS, and DHR, the city launched the Laborer's Trainee Program this summer. The twelve-week program gave 70 recent CPS graduates work experience and Union bidder rights as a Laborer. 55 went on to become full-time laborers for the City of Chicago.

Our training section launched the first citywide employee performance management program which provides departments with the tools and support for employee performance reviews. We also developed a new on-boarding training to provide a stronger new employee orientation.

The Policy and Labor Relations division provides guidance to departments on labor issues, the City's personnel rules, and operating policies. This year our Labor Relations division worked with AFSCME to consolidate 22 administrative titles into 9 titles. This effort enables DHR to hire titles faster through universal postings.

KEY STRATEGIES

DHR focused on four key strategies for 2024. Fix the DHR Foundation. Attack vacancies. Elevate External Communication. Drive Workforce development. In fixing DHR's foundation, we filled key vacancies with a particular focus on critical positions in Employment Services, the EEO office and Disability Office. Our strategy of having recruiters work across multiple departments resulted in a doubling of capacity. In January 2024, our capacity was 111 titles per month and for 2025 capacity is 296 titles per month.

In partnership with departments, we reduced unnecessary employment testing. In 2024, we cut 20% of tests. DHR also moved key job titles to in-interview assessments to reduce time to hire. Our 2025 testing reduction target is 30%.

DHR elevated our external communications this year with the launch of the weekly City Jobs Flash. This compilation of job postings was sent out to every Ward office and other key City stakeholders. The Job Flash had direct links to make applying easy. Our DHR recruiters attended over 35 job fairs and community events to raise the awareness of City employment.

2025 BUDGET PROPOSAL

DHR's 2025 budget proposal is \$13.5 million. The majority of the budget is in personnel costs for employment services and compliance. Our non-personnel spending has funds targeted for administrative operations, testing expenses, and the Human Resource Board.

CONCLUSION

DHR is committed to delivering the highest quality of services to City departments and the citizens of Chicago. I would like to thank the City Council and City departments for their ongoing partnership in these efforts. I would also like to thank our employees for being diligent partners to City Departments.

Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. My staff and I are pleased to answer any questions that you, or the members of the City Council, may have on our presented budget.