VERMONT
AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Department of Environmental Conservation

Department of Environmental Conservation

Recruiting and Hiring Manual

Resources and information for hiring managers on the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring process.

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Recruiting and Hiring Checklist

POSITION APPROVAL / APPROVAL TO RECRUIT

Position Title: ____________________ Manager: ____________________

Position #: ____________________ Type: ☐ Permanent ☐ Ltd Service ☐ Temporary

Supervises? ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ Request for Personnel Action (PAR) form completed

JOB POSTING INFORMATION

Email the DEC recruitment manager, Judy Thurlow, the following information along with the completed (but not signed) Request for Personnel Action (PAR) form; Judy will get the necessary signatures.

Position Description: ☐ Brief overview (paragraph or two) of the position to be used in SuccessFactors.

Recruitment: ☐ Open/Competitive OR ☐ Internal Recruitment only (this is usually NOT an option)

Posting: ☐ 10 business days ☐ 30 business days ☐ Other _____ *(Note: 10 business days is the minimum)*

Advertising: ☐ Standard VTHR and JobsInVT OR ☐ Additional Venues________________________

VEWING AND SCREENING APPLICANTS

☐ Review all candidates for position (applications and resumes/cover letters provided)

☐ Determine top candidates based on screening qualification criteria

INTERVIEWS AND REFERENCE CHECKS

☐ Determine interview panel and review roles, questions, and response-rating criteria

☐ Schedule and conduct interviews; rate responses and rank candidates

☐ Check references on top candidate(s)

IMPORTANT: No type of offer can be made at this point; contact Judy Thurlow for next steps.

EMPLOYMENT OFFER

☐ Contact Judy Thurlow for next steps and email her a completed, unsigned PAR form.

PREPARING FOR THEIR FIRST DAY – complete a minimum of two weeks prior to their start date

Email the division director and AID director the following information:

Employee Name __________________________________ Start Date: ______________________

NL Cubicle Needed? ☐ YES ☐ NO (regional office location or reason), ________________________

Cell Phone Needs: ☐ Basic Flip Phone OR ☐ Smartphone.

New Phone Number? ☐ YES ☐ NO (existing number to be used), ___________________________

Also complete the following:

☐ New Employee IT form submitted in a track-it request to IT

Schedule Orientation/Meetings *(n/a if temporary employee)*: ☐ HR Orientation ☐ Commissioner

☐ State of Vermont Badge: See instructions in Chapter 6

☐ National Life Access Fob and Parking Permit*:* See instructions in Chapter 6

General Information

The online SuccessFactors recruitment and hiring system has some great advantages for hiring managers, but there is also much confusion about the process and the steps involved. The DEC appointed a hiring manager "proxy" (a.k.a., recruitment manager, who is referred to throughout this document) to relieve our many supervisors and managers from having to administer these transactions in SuccessFactors. Currently that person is Judy Thurlow. We developed this manual as a resource/road map to help hiring managers navigate the procedures from vacant position to making a job offer. Additional resources on recruiting and hiring include the following:

- The state of Vermont DHR website: http://humanresources.vermont.gov/
- The state of Vermont DHR Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual
- Our agency DHR staff, who can be found at the ANR Office of Human Resources website

The above page is a summary checklist to help walk you through the hiring process and ensure that it goes as smoothly as possible. Be sure to check it regularly, making sure that all steps are completed in an accurate and timely manner.

Special note: If you find yourself with a vacant position because you've received notice from an employee that they are either resigning to accept a job elsewhere, or possibly retiring from state service, please refer to the following quick checklist that outlines the steps a hiring manager should take once they've first been given notice from an employee who will be leaving their position.

1. *The departing employee must provide a resignation letter with termination date to their supervisor who, in turn, forwards this on to the DEC recruitment manager. This is a simple letter from the resigning employee addressed to the supervisor stating they intend to resign/retire from their position and confirming what their last official day of work will be (close of business date).*
2. *The DEC then provides the employee a confirmation resignation acceptance letter from the commissioner, a copy of which is emailed to the DEC recruitment manager. The employee cannot change their mind at this point.*
3. *Complete the Request for Personnel Action form under the section Notification of Termination.*
4. *Complete the ANR IT Former Employee form through the online portal provided below to close related IT/email accounts and access.*
5. *Review the ANR Employee Separation Checklist policy.*
6. *Complete the DEC Employee Separation and Transfer Checklist.*
7. *Note: This includes some additional forms as well as collecting the National Life access fob, state ID badge, phone, computer, other field/office equipment, etc.*
8. *Manager/division director completes an exit interview.*

Step 1: Approval

Position Approval / Approval to Recruit

Important: *During certain circumstances (e.g., hiring freezes, pandemics), approval from the Agency of Administration may be required* ***prior*** *to any recruitment activity.*

Once you have a position for which you want to recruit candidates, you will need to complete the Request for Personnel Action (PAR) form and email it to Judy Thurlow, who will then route it via DocuSign to the appropriate people (division director, AID director/Fiscal Operations, commissioner's office). This form can be obtained from the ANR – DEC Supervisors Teams Channel under Files or from Judy Thurlow.

- DEC Request for Personnel Action
    - Complete the "request recruitment" section **AND** the bottom section that is required for any action.

After you have approval to recruit for a position, you can move on to the job-posting process that the DEC recruitment manager will administer on your behalf in SuccessFactors.

Step 2: Posting

Job Posting

As per DHR policy, classified open/vacant positions must be posted online on the DHR SuccessFactors website. This includes all positions for which an agency or department wishes to recruit internally for promotional or transfer opportunities as well as open/competitive positions. All position vacancies that a department intends to fill must be posted on the DHR SuccessFactors website for a minimum of ten (10) business days. Note: You may extend the recruitment period or go back out for recruitment if necessary.

Because each position in state government has a position ID number, classification title, and corresponding job specifications, much of the job posting is pre-established (the job specifications highlight the general duties of the position and required minimum qualifications). All state of Vermont job specifications are located on the ANR DHR website here.

In addition to the standard job specification, you may elect to include a job overview/lead paragraph (or two) and any additional requirements (e.g., cover letters, one or two preferred qualification questions, etc.). Because we use many similar job specifications for a variety of jobs in the division/department, this overview is critical for describing the position and helping attract the attention of the right candidates. The overview provides an opportunity to describe in detail the duties of the job and anything that may fall outside of the standard job specifications. It also allows you to describe the characteristics necessary for effective job performance and the specific behaviors you would like the employee to exhibit.

Things to think about in the job overview:

- Which program does this position work for?
- What precisely are the job responsibilities?

- Are there any preferred qualifications for the job? *(In addition to what is specified as minimum qualifications set in the job specifications)*
- What specific behaviors would you like to see?
- If you are recruiting for a temporary position, you may also want to indicate the expected schedule and season for the position.

Email this overview to department recruitment manager, Judy Thurlow, along with the DEC Request for Personnel Action (PAR) form, which details **essential/required** information, including how long the position should be posted; whether the position supervises; and all relevant coding (taskgroup, time reporter group [TRG], and Dept. ID). *Please carefully review the PAR and supply all relevant/requested information.* The DEC recruitment manager will then get the division director, AID director, and appointing authority/commissioner approvals and enter the job posting request into the SuccessFactors system. Both ANR-HR and the DHR Recruitment Services Section will review the requisition prior to posting and may provide comments or suggestions as needed.

Keep in mind, in the DEC, we use a hiring manager proxy (Judy Thurlow, department recruitment manager) so that individual hiring managers DO NOT need to be registered in the SuccessFactors system to manage or navigate job postings. The department recruitment manager can perform all transactions in the SuccessFactors system as needed for the DEC hiring managers, including managing the list of candidates and providing electronic applications/resumes. The department recruitment manager will also provide guidance throughout the hiring process.

Special Note: *With the enactment of the federal Affordable Care Act, all temporary positions must also be posted through SuccessFactors unless they are direct hires (e.g., seasonal temp rehired from one season to the next). Below is a brief description of the temporary position process. If you are "direct hiring" a temp, you will need a State of VT Temporary Employment Application that conforms with "Ban the Box" (SOV Temporary Employment Application), and DHR will need to certify that the requested temp meets the minimum criteria for the position; after which, you can jump to Step 5: Making an Offer, and then you will need to complete the remaining steps.*

Temporary Position Recruitment Process:

For all temporary position recruitments, hiring managers within DEC will have the following two options available (these options align with Department of Human Resources' Policy 4, Section 4.02 for temp hiring):

- *SuccessFactors System*
  - *This is the same process followed for all classified, permanent, and limited-service positions*
- *Direct hiring — applicable when there is no actual recruitment*
  - *No posting, no advertising*
  - *Hiring manager has an individual candidate whom they desire to hire (for example, a callback of a seasonal worker from last year, possible retirees, etc.)*
  - *The applicant will still need to be certified by DHR that they meet the minimum qualifications of the position job specification*
  - *The policy on providing a formal written job offer (drafted by DHR) is required*

No offer of employment to a temporary employee may be for more than 1,280 hours of work per calendar year.

Additional Venues for Recruitment

When advertising a job opportunity, it is important to keep in mind your target audience, the length of time for which you are recruiting, and your overall advertising budget. Once a position is posted on the DHR website, it is also posted on Indeed, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. For additional costs, DHR can submit ads on behalf of the department to Seven Days, the Burlington Free Press, the Barre Times-Argus, and the Rutland Herald — this is called **Coordinated Advertising**. To submit an ad to one of these publications, simply complete the Coordinated Ad Request form and email it to DHR.Adrequests@vermont.gov. Each publication has different costs and deadlines for submitting advertisements, and that information can be viewed here.

Departments are also free to submit advertisements to publications and websites outside of our Coordinated Advertising; these are called **Independent Ads**. Hiring managers should follow the Independent Ad guidelines, and we encourage hiring managers to consult with their DHR talent acquisition specialist when submitting Independent Ads.

RIF Clear

Prior to your position being posted for internal and/or external recruitment, it must be first RIF (Reduction in Force) cleared by DHR. RIF Clear is the process by which a vacant classified bargaining unit position is reviewed by the DHR recruiter to determine whether the position must be offered to someone in state government with mandatory reemployment rights to the vacancy prior to posting a job requisition. This is done by DHR once they receive the official recruitment paperwork from the department, and prior to the position being posted formally for recruitment in SuccessFactors. RIF clearing takes place up to and including the time in which you are prepared to make a final job offer. RIF clear can have two outcomes and in most cases results in item B detailed below. You will only be notified by DHR if there is a candidate as detailed in item A below; otherwise, DHR will continue to process your recruitment request and the position will be posted.

A. There is a qualified and interested RIF candidate:
    - You will be notified by DHR and will need to contact the candidate within three (3) days to discuss the position with them.
B. There are no qualified and interested RIF candidates:
    - DHR will continue to process your recruitment request and the position will be posted.

Step 3: Screening

Viewing Applicants

After your position has been posted, and once DHR Recruitment Services has screened applicants to ensure that they meet the minimum qualifications for the position and moved them to Recruitment Review status, you can work with the department recruitment manager, Judy Thurlow, to monitor and view the candidate list as people apply for the position. If you choose, you can also register in the SuccessFactors system to review candidates. The department recruitment manager will be able to access the candidate applications and other accompanying files (cover letter, resume, etc.) once these have been screened by DHR Recruitment Services. While candidates are in this status, you can begin reviewing and downloading their applications, but you CANNOT begin contacting or interviewing candidates until they are in Hiring Manager Review status. The day after the official job posting application deadline closes, DHR Recruitment Services will move all candidates from Recruitment Review status to Hiring Manager Review status, meaning it is now OK for the hiring manager to begin contacting candidates, if they so wish, to schedule interviews and such.

To assist DEC hiring managers, after the job posting for the position officially closes, our department recruitment manager (Judy Thurlow) will send an email to the hiring manager that includes a zip file of all the candidates deemed qualified by DHR Recruitment Services as well as their applications and related resumes/cover letters. All qualified candidates will have an application; however, a resume and/or cover letter is not mandatory (unless specifically requested as part of the application process by the hiring manager), so not all candidates may have these additional documents.

Screening Applicants

Because DHR Recruitment Services (via the SuccessFactors system) will have already filtered out candidates that did not meet the minimum qualifications for the job (generally education and/or experience), you will now want to determine the additional criteria that you'll use to screen/rank the remaining applicants. To determine this, you may want to review the preferred qualifications specified in the standard job description and, of course, any additional qualifications that you may have included in your job posting. Consider what experiences and education make a candidate a good fit for the job, also consider what is required for the job versus what is trainable. This will help you and your interview team when reviewing the applications and determining your top candidates (the applicants you want to bring in for an interview). Because behavioral characteristics are difficult to pull out of a cover letter and resume, your screening criteria may be weighted heavily on the technical side.

It is important that you and your interview team keep notes and document these criteria so you can justify (if need be) what sets your top candidates apart from the others. If any information is missing, or you have any questions on a candidate while reviewing their application, you will want to note this so you can bring it up at the appropriate time. *All application review screening/ranking notes are part of the official hiring file and may be requested if a hiring decision is grieved; this file needs to be kept by the hiring manager for three (3) years following the recruitment.*

Step 4: Interviews

Preparing and Planning

DHR suggests that interviews be structured and conducted by an interview panel, as this is considered more reliable, valid, and legally defensible. It should be made clear to all panel members what is expected of them and how the hiring decision is going to be made (i.e., consensus, consultation, ranking, majority, or autocratic).

- A s*tructured interview* is a preplanned series of job-related questions that help you gather more information about the candidate's skills. The same questions are asked of each candidate, the same panel is used to interview each candidate, detailed notes are taken, and responses to questions are evaluated and ranked.
- An *interview panel* is generally composed of three members. The panel should be diverse and can include members from other programs or divisions. The panel should also and have a predetermined chairperson (generally the hiring manager or supervisor for the position).

Interview questions should be prepared well before the interview and be relevant to the job. It is important that they be tailored to evaluate the candidate's fit with the job requirements. A review of the position description and overview is crucial to developing the right interview questions and evaluating how the candidate may perform in the job.

In developing interview questions, consider using several different types with a focus placed on information yield. As a rule of thumb, aim to have 70% behavioral-type questions, 20% situational-type questions, and 10% self-evaluative- or experience-type questions (see chart below). See appendix for additional examples.

Question Type	Description	Sample Questions
Behavioral questions	Ask for specific examples of past behavior that relate to the requirements of the job High information yield (based on past performance)	Describe a situation where you had to defend or justify to someone a decision you made. Tell us about a time when you came up with an especially creative solution to a problem.
Situational questions	Describes a problem situation and asks the job candidate how he or she would handle it. Moderate information yield (applicant will most likely describe what they think they should do, which may or may not be what they would actually do)	You find it extremely difficult to work with one of your co-workers. This person is always trying to make you look bad and him/herself look good with your boss. How would you handle this situation?
Self-evaluative questions	Asks candidates to be reflective in providing information about themselves, such as likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, goals, attitudes, and philosophies. Low information yield (prone to exaggeration)	What did you like most about your last job? Why are you better suited for this position than other candidates?
Experience/activity questions	Gather information about the kinds of experiences or activities the person has had in the past Low information yield (most answers can be found on a resume)	How has your previous experience prepared you for the duties of this position?

The next thing to think about is the pattern and flow of the interview. Generally, you should aim for the interview to last 45–60 minutes. Always start with a broad review of previous experience to elicit or clarify information concerning work history and education and training. Once that is established, you can move into specific questions related to job duties and requirements. To the extent that it's practical, plan the transitions between questions. The interview questions should flow relatively smoothly from question to question. If you have already selected an interview panel, share the questions with them and ask for feedback before finalizing.

After you have created the interview questions and structure, you will need to develop a standard response-rating criteria sheet. Rating criteria provides documentation to justify your decisions, structures your decision-making, and helps you to avoid making snap judgments. Generally, a five-point scale works best with preset anchors (both descriptive and evaluative) for at least three of the points on the scale. See the example below.

Five-Point Scale	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Evaluative Anchors	Did not respond to the question or answer was not what the panel was looking for.		Response contained acceptable content; basic info was provided.		Response was detailed, articulate, and beyond what was expected.
Descriptive Anchors	No real system used.		Considered task importance and did the most important first.		Used a specific system involving listing the tasks and assigning priorities.

For additional information on developing interview questions and ratings, see the Vermont Human Resources Guide to Interviewing and Reference Checking, pages 11–19. The DEC HR field rep is also a good source.

Scheduling Interviews

Once you have determined your top candidates and your interview panel, you will want to schedule interviews. In addition to the candidates that you screened, you may also have candidates with *mandatory interviews* (applicants with disabilities that have requested mandatory interview status through the DHR Labor Relations Division). Applicants who qualify for this status and who apply for a job requisition must be offered an interview by the hiring authority (see Personnel Policy 3.2 – Reasonable Accommodation, for more information). Generally, it is department protocol for current or former DEC classified employees who apply and meet the minimum qualifications for the job to be interviewed for this opportunity.

When scheduling the interviews, remember to give the candidate directions, inform them of who they will be meeting with, provide them a list of anything they need to bring (photo ID, contact information for references), and tell them how long you expect the interview to take. Interviews may also be conducted via Teams.

Conducting Interviews

Plan to meet with all members of the interview panel at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time to ensure everyone is clear on their role in the interview and which questions they will be asking. Everyone should have a copy of the applicant's resume and supporting materials, interview questions, and a rating sheet.

Start the interview with the chairperson introducing all members of the panel and outlining the purpose and process of the interview. It is also generally helpful to briefly describe the position and the program/team the candidate would be working with. Interviews can be stressful for the applicant — create a relaxed atmosphere where the candidate can ask questions and be heard.

It is suggested that panel members take turns asking the different questions; this way, the interviewee can hear from each panel member and each panel member is involved in the process. While the candidate is responding to questions, panel members will want to take notes on the answers. You do not need to record everything, but should focus on specifics, skills, and enough to be able to recall their responses later. Limit notes to what the candidate said or did and avoid making judgments until after the interview. Panel members should rate each response based on how the candidate's response correlated with the predetermined rating criteria.

In some cases, candidates may give incomplete or nonspecific answers to your questions, or their answers may be unclear. Thus, the interviewer may need to prompt or ask follow-up questions to get a complete answer. However, only limited probing is recommended. When necessary, especially for behavioral questions, probing should follow the STAR approach: Situation/Task, Action, and Result.

Sometimes an applicant may digress in their response or may start to repeat what they have said already. If the applicant strays too far afield and begins rambling, it is the interviewer's responsibility to bring them back on course. A good way to handle this situation is to acknowledge the applicant's comments and direct the conversation back to the prepared questions.

On occasion, a candidate will have trouble thinking of a specific example and will sit for a moment or two in silence. Allow silence to encourage the candidate to provide more information or think about an answer. Don't hesitate to let the person know that silence is okay, and you don't mind waiting while the person comes up with the best example. Although 30 seconds may seem like an eternity, it is not unreasonable, especially with an introverted candidate.

When the interview is complete, thank the interviewee for meeting and indicate what they can expect next (how and when they will hear back from you, whether you expect to be conducting a second round of interviews, whether you need their reference contact information, etc.). After each interview, panel members should review or complete their notes and ratings.

Evaluating Candidates

Once all interviews are completed, the panel should meet to discuss the candidates, their responses, and the panel's ratings and notes. It is Ok for a panel member to change their rating during this phase as their perspective may have changed from the first candidate to the last. When everyone is comfortable with their ratings, they should be averaged to give a final score. Ideally, after the interview(s), one or two candidates will end up being ranked highest and the panel will have a discussion about any concerns or how they think the candidate(s) would perform in the role. A determination should be made regarding whether an additional round of interviews needs to be conducted — either to hold a second round of interviews for the top candidates or to interview additional candidates, especially if the panel is split or uncertain. Document the discussions and the reasoning for any decision made. *All interview notes and ranking are part of the hiring file and may be requested if a hiring decision is grieved; this file needs to be kept by the hiring manager for three (3) years.*

References

Reference checks are very important and necessary to avoid negligent hiring. Once you have interviewed and ranked your candidates, you will want to conduct reference checks on your top one or two candidates. It is not necessary to conduct reference checks for all applicants that you interview, especially if you have already determined your top applicants. Reference checks should be restricted to professional references, not personal ones. Whenever possible, check references by phone, not by mail. Some organizations and people tend to be reluctant about putting less than positive remarks on paper. Also, try to talk to the candidate's direct supervisor.

To facilitate a uniform, structured approach and create an easy means of record-keeping, it's a good idea to develop a reference form. It should include your name; the date; name of applicant; position applied for; name, title, and organization of the reference; and the questions you will ask about the applicant. The form should have plenty of room for noting responses to your questions.

As a standard practice, the following areas should be covered:

- What were the dates of his/her/their employment with your organization?
- What were his/her/their job title and primary responsibilities?
- What was the reason for separation of employment? (if applicable)
- Did they leave in good standing? Would you rehire him/her/them?
- Was he/she/they ever disciplined or suspended? Could you describe the circumstances surrounding such incidents?

Other common questions include the following:

- Can you tell me about a team project that he/she/they worked on and what the results were?
- Tell me about a time when he/she/they worked with a difficult team member?
- Can you tell me about the most valuable thing he/she/they brought to your team?
- What projects or tasks did he/she/they excel at?
- What projects or tasks were difficult for him/her/them?
- When faced with a technical challenge, how did he/she/they respond?
- How did he/she/they manage differences of opinion and work styles?

All reference check notes are part of the hiring file and may be requested if a hiring decision is grieved; this file needs to be kept by the hiring manager for three (3) years.

Regarding reference checks for current or past state employees — either requesting or being requested of you:

- Internal reference checks (within the executive branch) may be provided without the consent of the employee.
- External reference checks (from entities outside the executive branch) may only be provided with written consent of the employee. If the candidate lists a professional reference on the job application, that is sufficient written consent to contact the reference.

More information on reference checks and examples of questions to consider can be found through the Vermont Human Resources Guide on Interviewing and Reference Checking, pages 32–37.

Step 5: Making an Offer

Prior to Making an Employment Offer

IMPORTANT: Out-of-state candidates must be reviewed and discussed with HR prior to a verbal or written offer being made to the candidate (please see the section on I-9s in Step 6 below). Once the interviews, panel discussion, and reference checks have identified a top candidate, you will need to work with the department recruitment manager (Judy Thurlow) to complete the following steps **prior** to giving any type of offer to the candidate. To initiate this pre-offer process, the hiring manager must complete the DEC Request for Personnel Action (PAR) form and provide it to the department recruitment manager, who will then route it via DocuSign for signatures from the division director, AID director/Fiscal Operations, and commissioner. The PAR can be obtained from Judy Thurlow, or from the ANR – DEC Supervisors Teams channel.

DEC Request for Personnel Action

- Complete the "request authorization to hire" section **AND** the bottom section *(required for any action)*.

After receipt of the PAR, the department recruitment manager will move the selected candidate to the pre-offer status in SuccessFactors, which will inform the candidate via a system-generated email that they need to go in and update their application by completing the action items below as appropriate.

IMPORTANT: An official job offer can only be made **AFTER** the steps below have been completed by the candidate and then verified by DEC's HR administrator.

A. New Hire Affidavit for Tax Compliance (N/A if current state employee)
   - After this is completed by the candidate in SuccessFactors, DEC's HR administrator will route it to the Tax Department to verify that the individual is in compliance with Vermont State Taxes. Once the HR administrator receives confirmation of "good standing" back from the Tax Department, they will notify the hiring manager and department recruitment manager of the finding.

B. Criminal Conviction History Declaration (applicable to **ALL** candidates)
   - Once this is completed by the candidate in SuccessFactors, our HR administrator will review the information and notify the hiring manager and department recruitment manager with any findings. Pursuant to executive order 03-15, "Ban the Box Hiring Policy," the state of Vermont does not request information regarding an applicant's criminal history during the initial stages of the application process, except for specifically exempted positions. Instead, this declaration step will be used to obtain information about an applicant's criminal history at this later stage in the selection process. **A criminal background does not automatically exclude any applicant.** Instead, if there are any findings communicated by the HR administrator, the hiring manager must assess whether the applicant's history warrants exclusion based on the nature of the position and the connection between any convicted offense and the position.

C. Nepotism Waiver
   - If the candidate is related to a current department employee, the hiring manager will need to request a nepotism waiver. Draft a memo **through** your division director, **through** the AID director, and **through** the DEC commissioner **to** the DHR commissioner explaining the

relationship between the current employee and the candidate, the work proximity (work/office locations, direct-work contact, and opportunity to influence the work of each other) between the two individuals, and the qualifications of the candidate. This should be provided to the DEC recruitment manager for routing and approval along with a copy of the organizational chart. You will need to receive approval from DHR (in the form of "Conditional Approval to Hire a Relative") prior to considering or making an official job offer. Refer to Policy 5.2 in the HR Policy and Procedures Manual regarding conflicts of interest and nepotism for more details.

Employment Offer and Paperwork

After receiving confirmation that the candidate is in good standing with the Tax Department and that their criminal history declaration is acceptable, you will want to verbally/unofficially offer the candidate the position; then, assuming they accept the position, you will want to answer any additional questions they have and discuss their start date. **Keep in mind, candidates that are current state employees can only transfer positions at the start of a new payroll period.** In addition to the start date, you will also want to ask them for their full (legal) name and confirmation of whether they are an external candidate or current state employee, as DHR needs this to finalize the offer letter and get them set up in the system. Please forward this information to the DEC recruitment manager.

Once the approvals are in place, and the pre-offer process is complete, the DEC recruitment manager (on behalf of the hiring manager) initiates the official job offer request in SuccessFactors, which alerts DHR via a system-generated email to make the job offer to the candidate via SuccessFactors. The DEC recruitment manager will also send an email to DHR, and copy the hiring manager, notifying both that the final candidate has been moved to offer status in SuccessFactors.

DHR will notify both the DEC recruitment manager and respective hiring manager via email when the official offer letter has been completed and sent via SuccessFactors to the final candidate. The **candidate** will need to log back into SuccessFactors and officially accept/decline the job offer once it is ready.

Now that you have a candidate who has accepted the position, you will want to notify the other applicants of their status. You can do this either verbally for all candidates (or at least the ones you interviewed) or have the department recruitment manager send an automatically generated email via SuccessFactors to all or specific applicants, informing them that they have not been selected.

All other personnel forms can be completed on the employee's first day of work. Please advise your new employee to bring appropriate identification on their first day to facilitate this step.

Step 6: Preparing for the First Day and Onboarding

Now that you have an employee lined up to start, there are a few things to do to ensure everything is all set for their first day. **Several of these tasks need to be completed a minimum of two weeks <u>prior</u> to the new employee starting** (more time may be needed if this is an entirely new position, and we need to order equipment), while some can only be completed **after** the employee has been issued an employee ID number.

- **Computer:** Complete the online Agency of Digital Services/ANR IT New Employee IT Form (this includes transfers within DEC) so that ANR IT can get the new employee set up with a computer and the necessary login credentials.

- If this is a new position (meaning you're **not** refilling an existing position), work with your division director or business manager ahead of time to ensure IT equipment is ordered for the position.

- **Duty Station & Phone/Cell Phone:** Email the division director or business manager the employee's name, start date, space needs (NL cubicle or regional office), and their cell phone needs (smartphone or basic flip phone), including whether an existing number should be used.
- **Gas Card:** Gas cards go with the vehicle not with the person; therefore,
  - If the vehicle plate starts with a C, contact Karen Robbins to add folks to the gas card for that particular vehicle;
  - If the vehicle plate starts with an F, contact Penny Touchette in BGS Fleet to add folks to the gas card for that particular vehicle.
- **National Life Access Fob & Parking Permit** *(if stationed at National Life)*:
  - **NL Fob:** Email the new employee's legal name, photo (taken against a white/neutral background; smartphone photo is fine) and start date to Veronica Mascena in the ANR Central Office.
  - **NL Parking Permit:** For a parking permit, have the employee fill out the National Life Parking Permit Request form and either bring it to the Davis 2 lobby security desk or email it to cbaker@nationallife.com. Pickup is at the security desk.
- **State of Vermont Identification Badge** *(needed for most new employees)*: This can be requested by following the steps below *after* the employee has been given their employee number and state email address (send this form to Judy Thurlow):
  - Download *(to your desktop)* the Request for NEW Access/ID Badge OR Reactivation form, which can be found on the ANR staff website under staff forms
  - Use employee's full/legal name
  - Under "Employee Office Location" and "Preferred Mailing Address," please use only SOV locations, **NOT** home or remote work addresses
  - Employee ID number is required before submitting
  - Under "Department," choose DEC
  - Under "Card Type," choose Access Card
  - Under "Purpose," choose New Card
  - Under "specify building and department," write Annex (always list Annex, whether or not access is wanted) and any regional offices (be sure to include the mailing/street address for each; see Appendix B) – DO NOT include any National Life buildings. For VAEL, please include one or more of the following options:
    - General Access – N
    - Watershed – N

    (N means 6 a.m.–10 p.m., 7 days per week access)
  - Under "Hours Requested," choose FULL: 24/7 All Times
  - **IMPORTANT: DO NOT SIGN FORM**, email a copy of the form, along with a photo of the employee (taken against a white/neutral background; smartphone photo is fine), to DEC recruitment manager (Judy Thurlow) to arrange for this badge request through Buildings & General Services.

- **I-9 Form:** Effective July 31, 2023, the federal government ended the temporary pandemic rule that allowed employers to verify I-9 documents virtually. The I-9 is a Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration form that must be completed by all newly hired employees, within the first three (3) days of employment, to verify their identity and eligibility to work in the US.
- Effective immediately, we must go back to verifying I-9s in person. This has been and will continue to be the responsibility of the hiring manager or supervisor because they see the person within the first three (3) days of employment. The business process for I-9s is as follows:
    - New hire meets with supervisor within 72 hours of employment;
    - New hire completes their section of the I-9 and shows IDs to supervisor;
    - Supervisor reviews IDs and completes their section of the I-9;
    - Supervisor does NOT take a photocopy of the IDs;
    - Supervisor forwards the completed form to their HR contact via email, and then pink mails the original form to the same contact.
- Your DHR representative can provide guidance to supervisors on the proper way to complete the form and answer your questions.
    - Laurie Bouyea-Dumont - Human Resources Manager / 802-272-5903
    - Jane Modica - Human Resources Administrator / 802-249-4489 / (ANR CO)
    - Cheryl Dopp - Human Resources Administrator / 802-461-8377 / (ANR CO, F&W, DEC, FPR)
- **IMPORTANT:** DHR recently learned that some states have implemented or will soon implement laws that require the use of E-Verify (an online tool to verify identity and eligibility to work in the US) by employers operating in their state. At this time, SOV, as an employer, does not use E-Verify for the purpose of verifying identity or eligibility to work in the US. These new state laws will impact SOV's ability to hire fully remote employees working from those states. DHR has confirmed that Florida's law took effect July 1, 2023. A few other states have similar laws in the works or already implemented, including Texas, Arizona, Idaho, and North Carolina.

  Therefore, effective immediately, whenever my team sees a request to hire a candidate with an out-of-state home address, they will contact the hiring manager to determine if the person intends to move to Vermont prior to their first day of work. If the plan is to hire the candidate as a **fully remote** employee, my team will request DHR Legal's guidance on whether the home state has an E-Verify law. If the home state does have an E-Verify law, we will recommend that the department or agency does not move forward with the hire. **Out-of-state candidates should be reviewed and discussed with HR prior to a verbal or written offer being made to the candidate.** We do not want to be in the position of rescinding offers of employment.
- **New Employee Orientation with the Department of Human Resources:** If this is a **new classified employee**, email the employee's name and start date to your HR administrator so that a new employee orientation can be scheduled *(n/a for temporary positions or current state employees changing positions).* He/she/they will then receive an email from DHR within the first few days of employment that provides instructions on completing the New Employee Orientation (NEO) and mandatory trainings, like the Defensive Driving Online Course. You must work with your DHR representative and verify that the new employee completes the NEO and mandatory trainings in a timely manner.
- **DEC's Quality Management System and Quality Management Plan:** With the new employee, review DEC's Quality Management webpage so that they are aware of the policies and procedures for ensuring that work processes, products, or services provided satisfy the stated expectations or

specifications of the department. The Quality Management Plan (QMP) documents the DEC's quality system and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) are a blueprint to obtain type, quantity, and quality of data we use to make our environmental decisions.

- **DEC's Health & Safety Information:** With the new employee, review the DEC's Health & Safety information so that they are aware of the DEC's Health & Safety Advisory Group, which works to promote an environment where all DEC employees are empowered to work together to help achieve and maintain a safe, healthful workplace. Review the related Health & Safety webpage, where the new employee will learn about the various DEC workplace health and safety guidelines, policies, procedures, and trainings, as well as what safety supplies or equipment may be available to them, depending on their job duties.
- **Meet the Commissioner/Deputy:** If this is a **new classified employee to DEC**, coordinate with the Commissioner's Office executive assistant for the new employee to meet with the commissioner/deputy at the next Commissioner Meeting with New Staff *(n/a for temporary positions or current DEC employees).*

Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

Behavioral Questions

- Describe for us your biggest challenge(s) in the workplace and how you have overcome it (them)?
- Describe a project you worked on independently and how your organizational skills helped to make the project successful?
- Please describe a time when you worked as part of a team to complete a large or complex task/project. How did the team work together and what was your contribution?
- Please tell us about a time when you demonstrated your leadership skills at work? What actions did you take? What was the result of your actions?
- Describe a difficult work situation and how you overcame it. What did you learn from it?
- Please tell us about a difficult/contentious group you have worked with. How did you diffuse tension and issues? How did you address differences in opinions and personality conflicts?
- Tell us about a time where you had conflicting priorities? How did you handle it? What was the result?
- Provide an example of a time when you identified an issue/need and proactively took the initiative to address it?
- Please describe a time when you felt successful at work? What was the situation? Why did you feel successful? What did you learn from that experience?
- Describe a situation in which you had to defend or justify a decision you made?
- Tell us about a time when you came up with an especially creative solution to a problem?

Situational Questions

- How would you handle the following situation? You are working as part of a team, and other members are not pulling their weight. You're picking up the slack, but it's starting to impact your primary job responsibilities.
- You disagree with a directive from your supervisor. How would you handle this?
- You find it extremely difficult to work with one of your co-workers. This person is always trying to make you look bad and him/herself look good with your boss. How would you handle this situation?

Self-Evaluative Questions

- Have you had an opportunity to review the job specifications? In your own words, what are the essential functions and duties? What interests you about this position?
- What are your top three strengths, and how would you use these for the betterment of this position and our department?
- What did you like most and least about your current (or most recent) job? Why do you want to leave (or why did you leave)?
- What aspects of this job interest you the most and least?
- What knowledge, skills, and/or abilities would you want to develop "on the job" to be more effective?
- What are your long-term career goals, and how does this job fit into that trajectory?

- Why are you better suited for this position than other candidates?
- Our offices are an open office/cubicle environment. Have you ever worked in an open office environment, or how do you think you would adapt to this?
- What do you think is the greatest challenge facing this program/department/agency?

Experience/Activity Questions

- Tell us about yourself and anything you would like to highlight from your resume and past experience, specifically as it relates to this position.
- How has your previous experience prepared you for the duties of this position?
- How comfortable are you with reading and interpreting complex state statutes, regulations, and procedures? In what situation have you done this in the past?
- How computer literate are you? Which software programs are you familiar with?

Appendix B: Regional Office Locations

Regional Office Locations and Addresses

ESSEX REGIONAL OFFICE
111 West Street
Essex Junction, Vermont 05452
Phone Number: 802-879-5656

SPRINGFIELD REGIONAL OFFICE
100 Mineral Street
Springfield, Vermont 05156
Phone Number: 802-289-0603

RUTLAND REGIONAL OFFICE
450 Asa Bloomer State Office Building
88 Merchants Row
Rutland, Vermont 05701-5903
Phone Number: 802-786-5900

ST. JOHNSBURY REGIONAL OFFICE
374 Emerson Falls Road, Suite 4
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
Phone Number: 802-751-0130

VAEL
163 Admin Dr.
Randolph Center, VT 05061