

INTER OFFICE MEMO

To: Board of Directors

Date: 11/08/2023

From: Ruby Horta, Asst. General Manager – Administration

Reviewed by: WC.

SUBJECT: Employee Referral Pilot – Proposed Policy

Background:

County Connection, like most transit agencies around the country, had been experiencing staffing shortages prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. These shortages were further exacerbated during the pandemic due to early retirements, safety concerns for essential workers, and other reasons associated with the “Great Resignation”. Currently, we continue to experience staffing shortages, primarily in the operator and mechanic ranks, but also in other administrative roles.

The Administration & Finance Committee has been discussing the potential to implement an employee referral pilot program targeting four critical job classifications: operators, mechanics, storekeepers and service workers.

Staffing Analysis:

Over the last several years, progress has been made in many administrative departments including Finance and Planning with both departments being fully staffed as of October 2023.

The retirements in the Human Resources department provided staff the opportunity to re-envision the structure of that department and the recruitment for permanent staff is underway. With the assistance of Allison Picard, our Interim Director of Human Resources, we anticipate having a fully staffed Human Resources department by the beginning of 2024.

The Paratransit department has also experienced some turnover. Fortunately, the advance notice received from our former Director of ADA and Specialized Services allowed us to begin that recruitment process prior to her departure and our new Director of ADA and Specialized Services started in early November.

Finally, the Maintenance and Transportation departments continue to experience significant operator and mechanic shortages. Table 1 below outlines the budgeted vs. filled positions.

Table 1: Budgeted vs. Filled Positions

Title	Budgeted	Filled	Shortage
Operators	155	141 (+2 trainees)	12-14
Mechanics	18	13	5
Storekeepers	2	1	1
Service Workers	11	8	3

The service changes (13% reduction) implemented during the pandemic provided the opportunity to “right-size” a level of service that we can reliably provide with current our operator count. Any expansion of service would require a significant increase in operators.

Draft Policy:

The Recruitment Department continues to evaluate new methods to fill open positions and prepare the agency for enhanced service levels, as ridership continues to increase. With the support of the A&F Committee staff has developed a policy to implement an employee referral pilot program.

The attached proposed policy (Attachment 1) has been reviewed, revised, and approved by the A&F Committee and our legal team. If approved, it will be implemented on January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024 to the administrative staff, with an option for represented employees to be included in the program, upon approval by their respective union representatives.

Financial Implications:

As a conservative approach, assuming a robust response for the pilot we estimate half of the existing vacancies (about 12) to be filled by referral, totaling \$12,000. These costs can be covered under the existing Recruitment budget.

Recommendation:

The A&F Committee and staff recommend Board approval of the Employee Referral Program as a one-year pilot.

Action Requested:

The A&F Committee and staff request Board approval of the proposed policy to implement an Employee Referral Program starting January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Pilot extension subject to Board approval.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Employee Referral Pilot Policy and Sample Form

Employee Referral Program – One-Year Pilot (2024)

Upon recommendation by the Human Resources Director, and approval of the General Manager, a one-time award of \$1,000 will be paid to any permanent, full-time unrepresented County Connection employee who refers a hired candidate for the positions of Transit Operator, Mechanic I-VI, Service Workers and/or Storekeeper ("Eligible Positions"). Executive Management, the Director of Human Resources and the Hiring Manager of each respective position are not eligible for the incentive. Policy may be amended by the General Manager, as needed.

This award will be made in two payments: one-half (\$500) in the first pay period after the applicant begins employment, and one-half (\$500) in the pay period after the new employee has successfully completed probation, as defined by each job classification. The employee receiving the award must be employed by County Connection on (1) the date the applicant begins employment and (2) the date the new employee has successfully completed probation.

All awards are subject to applicable withholdings and authorized deductions and will be paid through the regular payroll system. The award will not be reportable as qualifying wages for purposes of the CalPERS defined benefit pension Plans.

To be eligible to receive an award, the employee must complete the Recruitment Referral Form, have the Form signed by the applicant, and submit it to the Human Resources Department no later than the applicant's first day of employment.

Only one employee will receive credit for making a referral. In the event there is more than one Referral Form is submitted for the same applicant, the employee who submitted the Employee Referral Form first will be eligible for the referral award. When two or more Referral Forms are submitted for the same applicant, the Director of Human Resources will investigate and determine which employee earned the award.

Represented employees may be included in the program upon approval of their respective union representatives.

Effective pilot period: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024. Pilot extension subject to Board approval.

County Connection

EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM – SAMPLE AWARD FORM

This form must be submitted by the employee requesting the award. It must be signed by the referred applicant and be submitted to the Human Resources Department no later than the applicant's first date of employment.

PLEASE PRINT:

I _____ am a permanent employee of County Connection.

I have referred _____ to County Connection to apply for the position of _____.

I am aware of, agree to and will be bound by the terms and conditions of the Employee Referral Pilot Program.

Referred (New) Employee Signature

Date

Referring Employee's Signature

Date

For internal use only

Human Resources Department Approval

Name:

Date:

Signature: