



TO: THE HONORABLE PERSONNEL AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE

October 18, 2017

REFERENCE: Personnel Department – Resources required for computer-based testing

COUNCIL FILE
17-1094

SUBJECT: PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT'S REPORT BACK REGARDING THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A PILOT PROGRAM FOR COMPUTER-BASED TESTING

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council support the Personnel Department's effort towards computer-based and online testing in order to test the most qualified candidates necessary to achieve the City's current and future workforce needs.

SUMMARY:

Council Motion 17-1094 instructed the Personnel Department to report on the resources required to develop a pilot program for computer-based testing, and provide an implementation plan to begin the pilot. This motion was initiated by Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, 7th District in order for the Personnel Department to identify the technological resources available to test and hire candidates necessary to resupply the City with an effective workforce.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Los Angeles Personnel Department is committed to innovative ideas and solutions aimed at addressing current and anticipated hiring needs for all City departments, and to continually improve the overall selection process. Over the last two years, staff from the Personnel Department Selection Division has researched and recently conducted pilot tests for Civil Service multiple-choice tests to be administered online and proctored remotely. These are steps necessary towards achieving the Anytime Anywhere testing model.

The Anytime Anywhere testing model is a forward thinking approach to testing that would allow candidates to take an online test from any location and would include online proctoring to ensure test confidentiality and integrity. This type of testing is also aimed at improving the candidate's experience as it would allow candidates to take the test in a setting where they feel most comfortable, select a date and time that works best for them, and would avoid the need to commute to a specified location in Los Angeles. The equipment requirements to achieve this from a candidate's standpoint are also fairly minimal, as it would require a PC, laptop, or tablet, and a webcam in order to proctor the candidate.

Starting in June of 2017, multiple-choice tests for the Electrical Engineering Drafting Technician and Plumbing Inspector examinations were administered online. Candidates were allowed to schedule themselves for the test and they were proctored online. In total, over 70 candidates were administered online tests and were scored and processed. In order to obtain feedback from the candidates, all candidates who participated in the tests were sent a survey to obtain feedback on their experience. The results of the survey resulted in over 80% of the respondents indicating favorably to their overall experience and stating they would prefer this testing approach moving forward. The results are extremely promising and indicate the need to continue to conduct more online remote proctored testing.

As a result of the Anytime Anywhere testing model and how it can improve the City's selection process, the Personnel Department was provided with \$70,000 this fiscal year to continue to conduct online remote proctored testing. Computer-based testing has been available at the Personnel Department's Test Center for some time, where candidates respond to essay type questions online. We plan to expand this to other types of tests in the near future due to the Test Genius system discussed below. Since 2015, the Personnel Department has offered candidates in specific exams the ability to take multiple-choice tests at test centers outside the City and across the country through a contractor.

Unfortunately, the Personnel Department Selection Division contract budget was reduced by \$598,000 in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which severely affected the ability to conduct more online remote proctored tests. Due to this loss, the expansion of Anywhere Anytime testing has been greatly limited. The Personnel Department will be asking for additional funding in the upcoming budget process to expand the Anytime Anywhere program. Upwards of 16,000 City candidates may be available to test through the Anytime Anywhere program depending on available funding.

The Personnel Department currently uses the Neogov online Candidate Tracking System. Neogov is vital for the Anywhere Anytime test model as it provides an online system for candidates to apply, be scheduled for exams, and for the scoring of those exams. In addition, the Personnel Department is implementing the Neogov Test Genius system, which is a Test Management System (TMS) that serves as the platform in which all online tests can be administered. These two systems are fully integrated, but current funding is limited.

Personnel Department staff has identified the systems currently available to carry out the Anywhere Anytime testing model. The only remaining component currently needed to fully implement Anywhere Anytime testing is a platform for remote proctoring. The Personnel Department has a current active Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for remote proctoring and several organizations have attended the required Bidder's Conference necessary to submit an RFQ. This is very promising; however, funding is necessary to finalize a contract and expand on the use of remote proctoring. Experience with previous contractors has been approximately \$85 per candidate. In order to continue the expansion of the Anytime Anywhere program, additional funding will be required for the Neogov system and remote proctoring.

The Personnel Department has partnered with the Mayor's Office and the Information Technology Agency (ITA) in efforts to expand online remote proctored testing. These efforts include identifying measurable goals, obtaining customer feedback, and selecting specific examinations to include in the pilot test. Personnel Department staff looks forward to continuing this partnership in our endeavors towards developing innovative testing procedures for current and future City candidates.

Personnel Department Selection Division staff is confident that online remote proctoring is the future of testing and an innovative approach to testing that would assist in acquiring the most qualified candidates and help to achieve the goal of making the City of Los Angeles the best run big City in the nation. The funding necessary to achieve this goal is very critical as we continue to conduct more online testing and strive to meet department needs.



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