

2023

CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION EMPLOYEE OUTREACH EXECUTIVE REPORT

*Findings, Recommendations, and Implementation Strategies to
Elevate the City of Richmond to an Employer of Choice*



CITY OF RICHMOND
3/1/2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor Levar Stoney’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Budget announced a comprehensive review of the City of Richmond’s employee compensation and benefits. The goal of the review was to assess and identify changes, actions, and priorities that the city can implement to become an Employer of Choice.

WHAT IS AN “EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?”

An “Employer of Choice” offers a fantastic work culture and workplace environment that attracts and retains superior employees. Goals of an Employer of Choice are to attract innovative and motivated individuals, respond to the concerns of its employees, invest in professional development, ensure accountability to both employees and stakeholders, and offer diverse benefit options and competitive compensation. To become an Employer of Choice, the city must evaluate needs of its employees considering current and future workforce trends. The comprehensive review of compensation and benefits was conducted by gathering feedback and using impartial analysis to develop specific and actionable recommendations to become an Employer of Choice.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS PHILOSOPHY

The City of Richmond strives for a competitive, market-based approach to pay. This approach demands benchmarks of internal and external equity as well as rewards for exceptional performance which include opportunities for development, growth, and promotion.

As a city, the three pillars of the pay philosophy are:

- Pay systems that are transparent, fair, equitable, and sustainable.
- Competitive starting salaries and regular employee pay increases based on compensation reviews in accordance with best practices.
- A minimum wage that leads by example.

The work city employees perform every day builds One Richmond. By adhering to our pay philosophy, the city will ensure that One Richmond is equitable, competitive, and poised to meet future challenges.

The city is taking steps to ingrain this philosophy. It is currently evaluating pay against the market to understand whether it lags (paying less than market rates), matches (pays roughly the same as competitors), or leads (pays for more jobs than competitors). Currently underway are two reviews: a market study of job classifications and compensation and a review of current job descriptions.

The FY 2023 Mayor's Budget revised certain job titles and included funding for adjusting the pay ranges for the sworn officer step plan with an average 18 percent increase. It also included a 5.0 percent salary increase and minimum wage increase to \$17.00 per hour for general employees. Compensation changes were \$17.4 million for sworn and \$11.1 million for general employees for a total of approximately \$28.5 million.

The City of Richmond is committed to providing a comprehensive and competitive benefits package that promotes the well-being of its employees and aids in the retention of the city's talent while also attracting highly qualified candidates.

The city's benefit package aims to:

- Provide high quality, affordable benefits.
- Support the health, security, well-being, and productivity of employees.
- Offer choices to tailor benefits to individual needs.
- Provide strong coverage through highly accessible networks and after-hour assistance of coverage providers.
- Offer packages that protect employees from certain major catastrophic expenses that can arise in unexpected healthcare issues, loss of life, or loss of income.
- Provide the advantage of using pre-tax benefits and/or tax-deferred options.
- Be compliant with federal, state, and local laws.
- Provide strong Employee Assistant Program (EAP) program, including offering many resources and services that are free.
- Provide programs that support the cost of retirement and pathways for employees to effectively save toward their retirement.
- Communicate benefits effectively to employees in an accurate, user-friendly, easily accessible, and efficient manner.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The review centered around five core areas encompassing the employee experience. The following areas were assessed for employee offerings, policies, processes, and perceptions to improvement opportunities:

- 1) Culture and Employee Engagement,
- 2) Recruitment and Retention,
- 3) Compensation and Benefits,

- 4) Professional Development, and
- 5) Performance and Accountability.

PARTICIPANTS

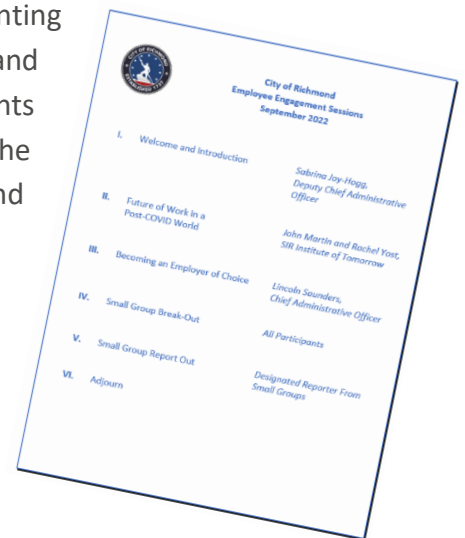
- Lincoln Saunders, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and Sabrina Joy-Hogg, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Finance and Administration, led the review.
- The Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) provided labor force and market trend data on Employers of Choice and the future of work.
- At least 220 employees with unique job titles from a variety of city departments provided engagement session input.
- Members of COR Connect provided their unique viewpoint based on previous direct experience with these matters.
- Directors and Deputy Directors provided management-level input.
- The Review Committee, consisting of employees from Human Resources, Budget and Strategic Planning, and Finance and Administration, facilitated the review process.

PROCESS

The city held twelve engagement sessions with employees representing all departments from September 13 to November 30, 2022, and gathered ideas, questions, comments, and suggested improvements under these areas, resulting in 21 recommendations. Two of the twelve sessions were with COR Connect members and Directors/Deputy Directors.

The employee engagement sessions used the following format:

1. **Welcome and introductions:** Sabrina Joy-Hogg, DCAO of Finance and Administration, provided a brief overview, purpose, and non-retaliation statement for each engagement session.
2. **SIR’s Future of Work presentation:** Overview of what it will mean to be an Employer of Choice in the future; topics covered included age shifts, growing need for diversity and inclusion, growing wealth gap, declining health, rise of purpose, workplace shifts, work force shifts.
3. **CAO Saunders’ presentation on becoming an Employer of Choice:** Discussed the importance of becoming an Employer of Choice, historical compensation actions,



surveyed the participants on what the city’s pay philosophy should be, and held a question-and-answer period prior to and after the breakout group activity.

4. Small Group Breakouts:

- a. Each table of three to six employees from different departments formed a breakout group to discuss four specific topics and/or questions. Participants were asked to focus on issues other than general wage increases, because the administration had already identified it as an improvement area working toward solutions.
- b. Participants were given 20-30 minutes to collaborate amongst themselves to discuss the questions, drawing on their own unique experiences and observations working for the city.

5. Report Out: Groups shared and presented their findings with the larger group.

The Review Committee documented outreach session comments, questions, feedback, and analyzed the results to develop findings and recommendations from the common themes identified throughout the sessions.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT: FINDINGS OF OUTREACH EFFORTS

This report centralizes ideas, comments, and feedback summarized in the findings and recommendations under each core area. The city looks forward to implementing recommendations and strategies to the extent possible.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY CORE AREA

The Review Committee categorized and analyzed all employee feedback collected via engagement sessions. The result of this collection of ideas, comments, and feedback have been summarized in the findings and recommendations under each core area as well as the word cloud below.

Figure 1



BUILDING ON EFFORTS OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY PAY PLAN WORK GROUP

Prior to the initiation of the classification and compensation outreach sessions, a similar, targeted effort was completed with the city’s sworn employees. In the spring of 2022, the Public Safety Pay Plan Work Group convened consisting of five members each from the Police and Fire Departments. This workgroup, in tandem with city administration leaders, identified several priority areas for improvement like those found in this report.

The results of those findings informed the Step Pay Plan adopted in the FY 2023 Budget, subsequent adjustments made for supervisors, and ensured that the pay plan structure considers years of sworn service. The outcome of this work yielded necessary and unprecedented increases to sworn employee compensation.

Even more members of the Police and Fire Departments participated in the citywide classification and compensation outreach sessions.

IDENTIFIED CORE AREAS

CORE AREA 1: CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- Improve communication and engagement within and between departments.
- Create a positive, respectful, and feedback-safe work environment where employees feel heard.
- Encourage teamwork and internal and external motivations for job performance.

CORE AREA 2: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Invest in existing talent.
- Consider recent graduate/trade school recruitment programs.
- Centralize the recruitment process and procedures through Human Resources.
- Review and balance market-based compensation with performance-based.

CORE AREA 3: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

- Review sick and vacation time policies.
- Examine compensation policies and review against the market for competitiveness.
- Review healthcare options.
- Enhance retirement benefits and preparation.
- Assess benefits such as parking and childcare.

CORE AREA 4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Centralize and standardize citywide and department-wide training programs.
- Invest in professional development opportunities for current employees.
- Incentivize training through tuition assistance and reimbursement.
- Partner locally for employee training needs.

CORE AREA 5: PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Review and revise job descriptions as needed.
- Incorporate employee input on performance.
- Implement standard, 360 performance evaluations.

- Update Human Resources policies to manage evaluation process citywide.
- Consider career ladder, merit-based increases, and other incentives.

CORE AREA 1: CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE

To continuously respond to the concerns of employees and build a culture where employees belong and thrive.

FINDINGS

- 1. Communication:** Employees want better communication, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing between departments and at all levels in and between departments. The word “communication” occurred the highest number of times - twelve (12) on the posters employees developed for this core area and “transparent/transparency” occurred six (6) times. Employees noted that they wanted a culture where every department can and wants to work together, where the department’s collective voice and direction is known, and with communication and knowledge-sharing within, between, and amongst all levels of departments.
- 2. Values:** Employees do not always feel valued, respected, or safe to express their opinions in their current environment. Even when employees are asked to engage, they do not feel heard when their ideas and/or suggestions are not implemented. Employees want to reduce toxicity, mistrust, and an “us versus them” mentality in the workplace, especially between management and subordinates. The word “accountability” occurred nine (9) times, “safe” occurred seven (7) times, “positive” occurred six (6) times, “motivated/motivation” four (4) times, and “respect” three (3) times on poster results for this core area. Employees want a culture of accountability as well as a more inclusive and welcoming environment where they feel appreciated and valued.
- 3. Teamwork and organizational support:** The ideal environment would ensure ideas are incorporated from all employees, from new hires to longtime employees. Employees want to feel supported by their coworkers and supervisors as well as by the organizational rules and policies. They want to be part of a team that is realistic as to what one person can accomplish and work together to achieve goals. The word “teamwork” was mentioned seven (7) times and “friendly/family” five (5) times on poster results for this core area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Improve communication and engagement within and between departments.** Cultivate more transparent communication up and down the hierarchy that includes:
 - Open door policy between employees and supervisors/managers.
 - Regular communication channels.
 - Transparency in decision-making that informs staff of updates (i.e.: team meetings).
- **Create a positive, respectful, and feedback-safe work environment where employees feel heard.** Build a motivated culture based on accountability and respect where employee ideas are received.
- **Encourage teamwork and internal and external motivations for job performance.** Create a team-oriented culture of continuous improvement through regular listening sessions and organizational evaluations. Support this culture with Human Resources (HR) policies and resource investment. Implement city-wide good job and recognition systems for both individual and team projects.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1-1: STRENGTHEN EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

Status / Timeline: Completed / Summer 2022

Impact: The HR Division Chief for Employee Relations/EEO, Gerald “Wes” Westry, began work in August 2022 to foster positive relationships and interactions among the city and its employees and maintain EEO compliance in employment decisions (including hiring, promotion, termination, compensation, and disciplinary actions).

STRATEGY 1-2: DEVELOP TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, AND PROCESSES FOR LABOR RELATIONS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2023

Impact: Recruit and hire a labor relations team to guide the implementation and program for managing labor unions. A labor program manager will be the point person for employees and administration. The Labor Relations Administrator will work on behalf of both the city and the duly elected labor unions. Leadership act as the liaison between the City of Richmond and labor unions. These relationships are critical to ensuring harmonious relationships between managers and employees. Additionally, the city will focus on training managers on labor laws and coordinate compliance training for supervisors, managers, and senior leaders.

STRATEGY 1-3: CONDUCT TRAINING FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS ON WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS AND LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES.

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Ongoing

Impact: Ensure equal employment opportunities and treatment of employees regardless of race, sex, color, age, religion, national origin, or disability. Conduct citywide culture training workshops with supervisors and managers. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and develop leaders who personify the organization's core values. Create leadership and supervisory training programs designed to provide current leadership and aspiring managers with the skills necessary to lead the organization. Identify pipeline of future leaders and create programs to support their development (i.e., job shadowing, mentorship programs, and exchange programs).

STRATEGY 1-4: CONDUCT EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Ongoing

Impact: This strategy convenes a group of dedicated employees to develop an annual calendar of events that are fun and engaging for employees. Activities such as wellness events, ice cream socials, employee recognition, day at the baseball stadium, or Richmond Raceway are just some of the events that are being considered for 2023. Providing opportunities for engagement through fun activities helps to convey administration's appreciation to hard-working employees.

CORE AREA 2: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

OBJECTIVE

To attract and retain innovative and motivated individuals.

FINDINGS

- 1. Utilize existing talent:** Employees encouraged the city to ensure it is doing what is necessary to retain and invest in existing talent. Employees noted there is a lot of talent at the city already, but sometimes they do not feel they have advancement opportunities. Important portions of employee retention noted additionally included succession planning and growing teams. There were at least five comments related to the city's existing talent under this core area.
- 2. Target recent graduate recruitment:** Employees noted the city does not focus enough on attracting the talents of recent graduates. It was suggested the city partner with local high schools, trade/technical schools, as well as colleges and universities to recruit recent

graduates. Recruitment of recent graduates from trade or other schools was mentioned in at least three comments under this core area.

3. **Remove inconsistencies in the hiring process:** Central Human Resources and departmental Human Resources liaisons should be more involved in hiring, departures, and recruitment. Departments should not lose potential recruits due to lag time in the hiring process. There were at least five comments related to the hiring process and Human Resource's involvement in this core area.
4. **Correct salary inconsistencies:** Employees voiced perceived inconsistencies related to salary, some of which conflicted. Employees simultaneously described:
 - There was a practice amongst some directors that employees should be brought in at the minimum of the pay range.
 - That new hires come onboard with a certain salary that may be more than current employees have obtained.

They described perceived inconsistencies with the continuity of compensation when an employee leaves and returns to the city, as well as among employees who must train new employees for comparable pay.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Invest in existing talent.** Provide career advancement opportunities, develop succession planning strategies, and invest in compensation, benefits, and Human Resources reform so that employees feel supported in their growth at the city.
- **Consider recent graduate/trade school recruitment programs.** Develop recruitment programs and partnerships with local institutions to attract recent graduates.
- **Centralize recruitment process and procedures through Human Resources.** Standardize, streamline, and automate recruitment, onboarding, and offboarding processes.
- **Balance market-based compensation with performance-based.** Assess and revise Human Resources procedures to ensure consistency and expediency in recruitment from start to finish.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 2-1: STRENGTHEN TALENT ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2023

Impact: Having a strong talent acquisition team will help the whole organization to attract and retain the most qualified employees. A Talent Acquisition Division Chief, James B. Henry has been hired. The department will work to strengthen all areas of the recruitment

and retention process by assembling a high performing team with credentialed HR professionals.

STRATEGY 2-2: FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS TO INCLUDE COMMUNITY COLLEGES, TRADE SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS, AND UNIVERSITIES

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2023

Impact: This strategy will build stronger relationships and collaborations with local schools to create a pipeline to attract qualified candidates who meet the city's workforce needs. These relationships are vital to identifying and recruiting talent for the city. In addition, the team will focus on candidate diversity and equity. A dedicated HR professional will be hired to ensure success for these efforts.

STRATEGY 2-3: ESTABLISH A CONSULTATIVE TALENT ACQUISITION TEAM TO FOCUS ON IDENTIFYING THE GAPS AND NEEDS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2023

Impact: Team will yield increased hiring results by identifying qualified active and passive candidates using up-to-date industry tools (i.e.: LinkedIn). The team will be professionally trained through the Recruiter Academy and have working knowledge of using social media as a source to identify candidates.

STRATEGY 2-4: CONDUCT CITYWIDE HIRING EVENTS

Status / Timeline: To be Implemented / Year-Round

Impact: HR will coordinate and host a citywide hiring event open to all who want to explore or apply for a job with the city. The event will include representation from all city departments, on-site hiring, resume consultations, and interview coaching. All vacancies will be posted and the positions for on-site hiring will be identified for potential applicants. The event can also accommodate additional community partners to increase the hiring potential of Richmond residents.

CORE AREA 3: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

OBJECTIVE

To offer diverse benefits and competitive compensation.

FINDINGS

1. **Update or revise leave policies:** Employees would like improved PTO, vacation, and leave accrual plans. Ideas suggested were leave accrual, buying back vacation/sick time, and added leave benefits related to mental health and parental leave. Employees described perceived inconsistencies in leave policies for essential employees. It was noted that the balance policy hinders those who have a break in service. There were at least thirteen comments related to comp or leave time under this core area.
2. **Implement performance-based, market-competitive pay:** Employees do not believe the city provides performance-based increases consistently or market-competitive compensation by job classification. Employees cited difficulties with retention due to wage competitiveness; employees transfer out of the city to get a higher salary. They also want tenure and performance to be taken into consideration. Issues related to pay were cited in at least nine comments, “competitive compensation/pay/salary” occurred three times in poster results, and “merit increase” occurred four times under this core area.
3. **Increase healthcare options:** Family plans were cited as too expensive, and employees suggested providing more healthcare options and reviewing costs per employee in at least four comments under this core area.
4. **Review retirement benefits:** Employees want better retirement benefits and options. They would like consulting on retirement as they transition out of the workforce and for the city to support the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) transition, as noted through at least four comments and nine poster results under this core area.
5. **Review parking, childcare, and other benefits:** Parking as a benefit was mentioned four times and childcare was mentioned three times in poster results for this core area. It was noted that the lack of sufficient parking and childcare benefits are proving to be deterrent in the hiring process. Other benefits noted were gym access, referral bonus options, and acknowledgement for training new employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Review and revise sick and vacation time policies.** Revise vacation and leave accrual policies if needed, including for essential employees. Reassess the leave policy for those who have a break in service.
- **Examine compensation policies and review against the market for competitiveness.** Review city’s compensation levels against state and local markets and take cost of living into consideration to close wage gaps.
- **Review healthcare options.** Review healthcare plans and costs per employee and continue to explore establishing employee health clinics.

- **Improve retirement benefits and preparation.** Complete analysis for the transition from the Richmond Retirement System (RRS) to VRS and bring back retirement consulting programs to support upcoming retirees.
- **Assess benefits such as parking and childcare.** Examine parking costs by department and assess options for parking and childcare options for employees.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 3-1: REVIEW AND REVISE ON CALL POLICY

Status / Timeline: Completed / Summer 2022

Impact: [Administrative Regulation 4.7](#) has been updated for employees who are required to work on call. The new policy increases the amount paid to on-call employees and standardizes practices.

STRATEGY 3-2: SHIFTING HEALTHCARE COST FOR DEPENDENTS

Status / Timeline: Completed / Winter 2023

Impact: As a result of the review of medical carriers/RFP and simultaneous feedback received in outreach sessions, family healthcare options shifting to the city reduces costs for those employees without adding additional burden to those who are individually insured.

STRATEGY 3-3: RELOCATED LACTATION ROOM FOR NURSING EMPLOYEES AT CITY HALL

Status / Timeline: Completed / Fall 2022

Impact: The Lactation Room for Nursing Employees at City Hall was moved to a more central location and made more comfortable. This relocation occurred as result of an employee request arising from an engagement session.

STRATEGY 3-4: CONDUCTED COMPENSATION STUDY FOR SWORN EMPLOYEES

Status / Timeline: Completed / Spring 2022

Impact: The FY 2023 Adopted Budget included an 18.0 percent average pay increase for sworn employees which increases the city's ability to retain and attract critical employees. In addition, ensuing adjustments to supervisor pay remediated issues of wage compression.

STRATEGY 3-5: MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Status / Timeline: Completed / Winter 2023

Impact: The city's 2023 Holiday Schedule incorporates the request by employees to recognize the need for mental health days. As such, two days of leave have been provided in recognition of the importance of mental wellbeing.

STRATEGY 3-6: REVIEW AND REVISE INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES

Status / Timeline: Not Begun / Summer 2023

Impact: Revise policy to ensure equity and fairness of scheduling employees and commensurate compensation practices. The revised policy should incorporate best practices and be market competitive.

STRATEGY 3-7: REVIEW OF MEDICAL COVERAGE/DESIGN

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Winter 2025

Impact: This review, beyond Review of Medical Carriers/RFP, will take a more holistic approach to assess the city's current Medical Coverage/Design to determine potential efficiencies and cost saving measures for both the insurer (city) and those insured (employees).

STRATEGY 3-8: STUDY CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION FOR GENERAL EMPLOYEES

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Spring 2023

Impact: This strategy will identify where there are classification gaps (i.e.: need for new or updated position titles), implement career ladders, and create competitive pay structures for new and existing employees.

STRATEGY 3-9: COMPLETE ANALYSIS OF TRANSITIONING FROM RRS TO VRS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Spring 2023

Impact: Completion of an actuarial study by VRS will provide information and associated costs of what it will take to become a VRS employer. Once the information is gathered, VRS completes the actuarial study, and costs are identified, City Council will have to consider and approve transition to VRS.

STRATEGY 3-10: PROCURE AND IMPLEMENT EMPLOYEE HEALTH CLINIC(S)

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2023-Winter 2024

Impact: After selecting an operator to implement this service, it is intended that city employees will have the opportunity to receive acute and primary care from a network of Health Centers provided by the city. These employee health clinics will increase access to employees and their dependents, promote preventive care, enhance the overall wellness of city employees, and reduce healthcare costs.

STRATEGY 3-11: ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE AND PREVENTATIVE EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2023-Winter 2024

Impact: Establish a robust health and wellness program that works in tandem (COR-sponsored wellness events, runs, biometric screening, etc.) with the employee health clinics to promote holistic lifestyle wellness, provide preventative care, and reduce costs for employees and the city.

STRATEGY 3-12: IMPLEMENT LANGUAGE INCENTIVE

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Winter 2023

Impact: Nearly half a million dollars has been set aside for this strategy via [Ordinance 2022-349](#). These funds will increase the compensation of multilingual employees and enhance city services for non-English speaking populations.

STRATEGY 3-13: REVIEW CITYWIDE EMPLOYEE PARKING POLICY

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2024

Impact: Convert to employer-sponsored parking to create equitable payment practices for employees. Additionally, create a comprehensive citywide transportation policy that is integrated with the telework policy designed to meet post-COVID work arrangements and the city's sustainability goals.

CORE AREA 4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

To invest in professional development for individual, team, and workforce advancement.

FINDINGS

1. **Insufficient citywide and department-wide trainings:** Employees noted the value of having consistent, standard trainings citywide or by department/portfolio as cited in at least eight comments under this core area. Consistent training would help new hires to understand the internal policies, procedures, and department-specific functions to conduct their jobs successfully. They would also like to see standard trainings on software and applications. Mentorship and cross-training programs would also provide knowledge transfer as a succession planning best practice.
2. **Lack of professional development and leadership training or opportunities:** Free training with the Library of Richmond was provided in the past, and employees would like to see more robust professional development programs, as noted in at least five comments under this core area. Employees emphasized the need for leadership training for

employees and/or supervisors in at least three comments. There is a desire to re-implement career development programs for public safety staff.

3. **Lack of educational incentives:** Employees want to see options for tuition assistance or reimbursement for training and/or continued education. Related benefits, such as time off for training or additional compensation, are desired, as some job-related training requirements must be met on a recurring basis as noted in at least four comments under this core area. If job duties require a heavy amount of training, provide incentives for those who train others as part of their job or in departments.
4. **Minimal local training partnerships:** The city does not fully capitalize on local educational opportunities. At least four comments under this core area mentioned partnering with institutions of higher education, local colleges, and local schools to provide apprenticeship programs for local trades, mentorships, and/or computer program training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Centralize and standardize citywide and department-wide training programs.** Centralize training through HR, provide citywide training curriculum on software and applications for new employees, and have departments provide their own mentorship and trainings as part of the employee onboarding process.
- **Invest in professional development opportunities for current employees.**
 - Support current employees' professional development through job descriptions and in the performance evaluation process, including career development for public safety staff. Encourage the performance evaluation process to discuss professional goals.
 - Provide options for leadership development programs for interested employees and new supervisors. Consider implementing annual training for supervisors and managers.
- **Incentivize training through tuition assistance and reimbursement.** Assess training needs by department and whether tuition assistance, reimbursement, or other benefits should be provided for certain job duties.
- **Partner locally for training needs.** Review local training opportunities and partner with schools and/or institutions to provide employee training.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 4-1: RECRUIT AND HIRE HIGHLY QUALIFIED CERTIFIED HR PROFESSIONALS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2023

Impact: Centralize citywide training and development programs. Hire a dedicated professional development training manager or division chief, trainers, and outsource for certain subject matter expertise. The training division will develop a suite of training opportunities for high demand areas of need.

STRATEGY 4-2: REVISE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2024

Impact: This strategy will centralize and standardize the tuition reimbursement program. Currently departments manage tuition reimbursement for their employees and provide funds as available. This strategy will identify a central funding source for employees who want to continue their education or obtain certification in their field of work.

STRATEGY 4-3: CREATE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Fall 2024

Impact: This strategy will coordinate various community partners such as J Sargeant Reynolds Community College to develop and provide apprenticeship programs and trainings for employees who need further certification or want to earn a higher-level degree. A centrally administered tuition reimbursement program allows for the equitable treatment of employees and ensures the city can utilize the new skills obtained.

CORE AREA 5: PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

OBJECTIVE

To enhance organizational performance and accountability through regular, consistent, and fair evaluation.

FINDINGS

1. **Tailored job descriptions and classifications:** Classifications alone do not necessarily reflect the skills needed and work performed or account for variation in the job functions by department. Job descriptions should balance uniformity and flexibility. The lack of tailored job descriptions, and its impact on evaluations, was noted in at least nine comments under this core area.
2. **Career ladder and performance incentives:** Employees want to have meaningful and objective performance evaluations which result in incentives such as incentives/bonuses for engagement and top performers. They also want to see a career ladder or other merit-

based system implemented that takes tenure into account, as noted in at least seven comments under this core area.

3. **Develop a new performance evaluation process:** Employees want the opportunity to provide input in the performance process. They see the current process as largely ineffective. It was noted that employee-to-supervisor and supervisor-to-employee performance evaluations (360 evaluations) would help hold leadership and team members accountable and provide a feedback loop, as noted in at least five comments under this core area. Employees suggested developing an online application for employees to input their accomplishments throughout the rating period.
4. **HR policies:** Outdated policies and practices can give employees the impression of bias and have a negative impact on employee morale. Processes should be implemented to ensure accountability by employees, supervisors, and managers, as noted in at least four comments under this core area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Revise job descriptions.** Review job classifications and revise job descriptions as needed.
- **Incorporate employee input on performance.** Consider implementation of tools such as an online performance appraisal system or an employee survey tool as a way for employees to provide input during the rating period.
- **Implement standard, 360 performance evaluations.** Develop a standard and citywide performance evaluation process to be followed by all departments that includes 360 reviews.
- **Update HR policies to manage evaluation process citywide.** Revise and create HR policies to ensure they are up to date, follow best practices and emphasize the merits of the work being performed.
- **Consider career ladder, merit-based increases, and other incentives.** Incentivize performance through a career ladder or step increase system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 5-1: JOB DESCRIPTION SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2024

Impact: The Job Description Survey and Assessment will increase Richmond's competitiveness by ensuring employees are compensated for the specific work that they do by creating additional job titles, classes, and descriptions where gaps are identified. Additionally, this effort will enhance career ladders in a tiered system for numerous departments and serve as the basis for the standards of future employee reviews.

STRATEGY 5-2: REVISE EMPLOYEE EVALUATION PROCESS

Status / Timeline: In Progress / Summer 2024

Impact: The redevelopment of the evaluation process will create standardized, but departmentally and positionally adaptable, process to measure individual and team performance. Once evaluations are standardized this can serve as an equitable cornerstone for career ladder advancement, merit-based increases, and other incentives.

CONCLUSION

Becoming an Employer of Choice requires a process of continuous communication and improvement. The City of Richmond is committed to tracking and monitoring progress on the implementation of the strategies included in this report on a biannual basis. Employees are encouraged to actively participate in the betterment of the employment environment, share and provide ideas, and feedback to collectively elevate and maintain the City of Richmond as an Employer of Choice.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CORE AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CORE AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Core Area	Recommendation
1	Culture and Employee Engagement	Improve communication and engagement within and between departments.
		Create a positive, respectful, and feedback-safe work environment where employees feel heard.
		Encourage teamwork and internal and external motivations for job performance.
2	Recruitment and Retention	Invest in existing talent.
		Consider recent graduate/trade school recruitment programs.
		Centralize recruitment process and procedures through Human Resources.
		Review and balance market-based compensation with performance-based.
3	Compensation and Benefits	Review sick and vacation time policies.
		Examine compensation policies and review against the market for competitiveness.
		Review healthcare options.
		Enhance retirement benefits and preparation.
		Assess benefits such as parking and childcare.
4	Professional Development	Centralize and standardize citywide and department-wide training programs.
		Invest in professional development opportunities for current employees.

CORE AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No.	Core Area	Recommendation
		Incentivize training through tuition assistance and reimbursement.
		Partner locally for employee training needs.
5	Performance and Accountability	Review and revise job descriptions as needed.
		Incorporate employee input on performance.
		Implement standard, 360 performance evaluations.
		Update Human Resources policies to manage evaluation process citywide.
		Consider career ladder, merit-based increases, and other incentives.

APPENDIX B: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION				
Core Area	No.	Strategy	Timeline	Status
<i>Culture and Employee Engagement</i>	1-1	Strengthen Employee Relations/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)	Completed	Summer 2022
	1-2	Develop Training, Educational Materials, and Processes for Labor Relations	In Progress	Summer 2023
	1-3	Conduct Training for Supervisors and Managers on Workplace Expectations and Leadership	In Progress	Ongoing
	1-4	Conduct Employee Engagement Activities	In Progress	Ongoing
<i>Recruitment and Retention</i>	2-1	Strengthen Talent Acquisition and Development	In Progress	Fall 2023
	2-2	Focus on Educational Institutional Relations to Include Community Colleges, Trade Schools, High Schools, and Universities	In Progress	Summer 2023
	2-3	Establish a Consultative Talent Acquisition Team to Focus on Identifying the Gaps and Needs	In Progress	Summer 2023
	2-4	Conduct Citywide Hiring Events	To Be Implemented	Year-Round
<i>Compensation and Benefits</i>	3-1	Review and Revise Inclement Weather Policies	Not Begun	Summer 2023
	3-2	Review and Revise On Call Policy	Completed	Summer 2022
	3-3	Shifting Healthcare Cost for Dependents	Completed	Winter 2023
	3-4	Relocated Lactation Room for Nursing Employees at City Hall	Completed	Fall 2022
	3-5	Conducted Compensation Study for Sworn Employees	Completed	Spring 2022
	3-6	Mental Health Days	Completed	Winter 2023

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Core Area	No.	Strategy	Timeline	Status
	3-7	Review of Medical Coverage/Design	In Progress	Winter 2025
	3-8	Study Classification and Compensation for General Employees	In Progress	Spring 2023
	3-9	Complete Analysis of Transitioning from RRS to VRS	In Progress	Spring 2023
	3-10	Procure and Implement Employee Health Clinic(s)	In Progress	Fall 2023 – Winter 2024
	3-11	Establish a Comprehensive and Preventative Employee Health and Wellness Program	In Progress	Fall 2023 – Winter 2024
	3-12	Implement Language Incentive	In Progress	Winter 2023
	3-13	Review Citywide Employee Parking Policy	In Progress	Summer 2024
<i>Professional Development</i>	4-1	Recruit and Hire Highly Qualified Certified HR Professionals	In Progress	Summer 2023
	4-2	Revise Tuition Reimbursement Program	In Progress	Fall 2024
	4-3	Create Apprenticeship Programs and Career Pathways	In Progress	Fall 2024
<i>Performance and Accountability</i>	5-1	Job Description Survey and Assessment	In Progress	Summer 2024
	5-2	Revise Employee Evaluation Process	In Progress	Summer 2024

APPENDIX C: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

MEETING/OUTREACH EVENT PROFILE

Session No.	Date	Target Group Description	No. of Attendees*
1	September 13, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	23
2	September 14, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	18
3	September 15, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	16
4	September 27, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	21
5	September 29, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	12
6	October 7, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	29
7	October 11, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	20
8	October 12, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	19
9	October 19, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	13
10	October 21, 2022	Employees from a variety of departments	23
11	November 30, 2022	COR Connect	33
12	December 9, 2022	Directors and Deputy Directors	50**

**Does not include Review Committee members in attendance.*

***Approximate number of attendees.*

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