

COUNTY OF OTTAWA  
HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR YEAR 2010



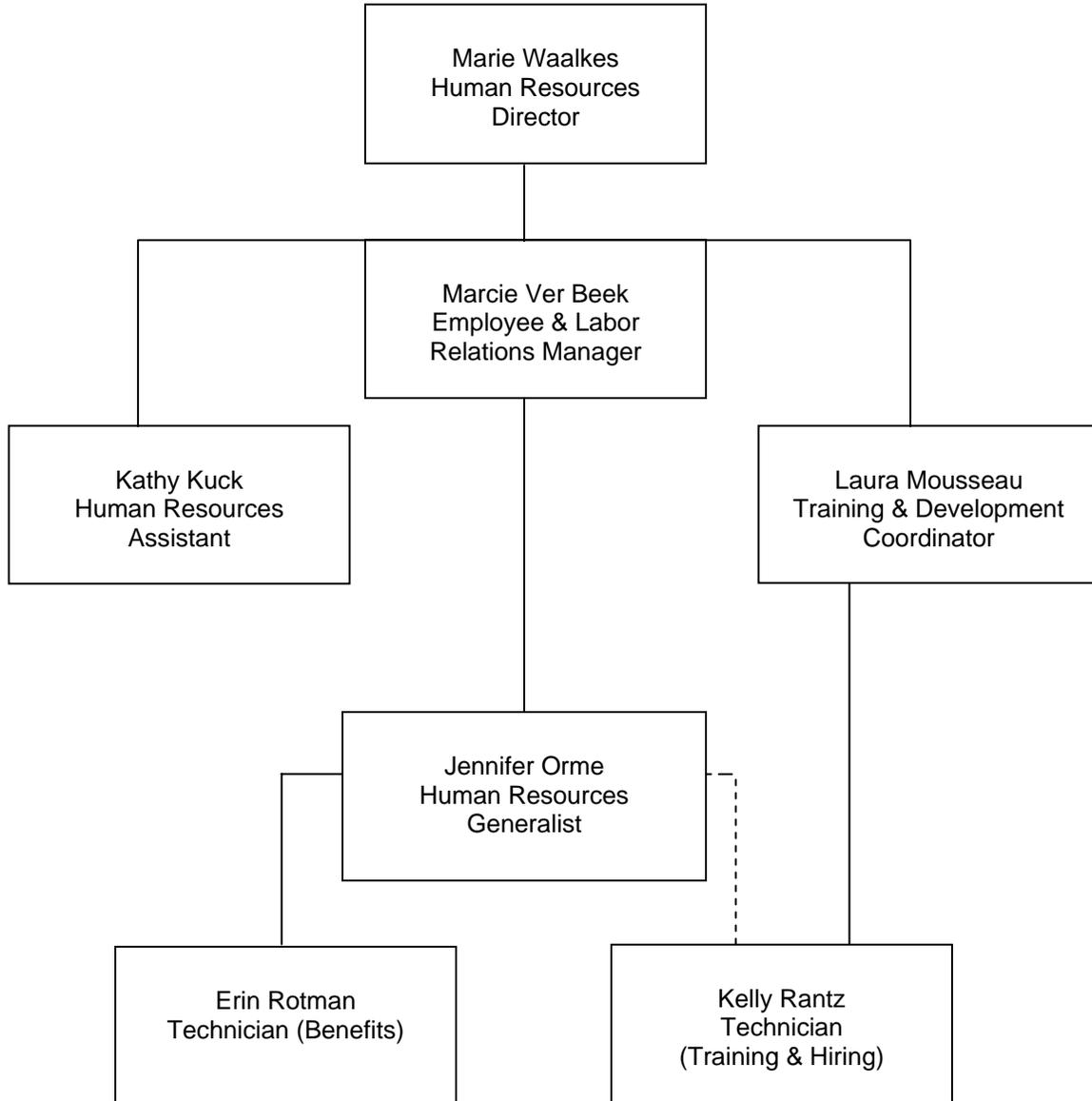
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# Human Resource Department Staff 2010



**2010 HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT'S  
ANNUAL REPORT  
TO THE OTTAWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Human Resources Department serves the County of Ottawa by focusing efforts on the County's most valuable asset, its employees. Human Resources does this through recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse, qualified workforce. The Human Resources Department provides human resource direction and technical assistance, training and development, equal employment opportunities and employee/labor relation services to the County.

**INTRODUCTION**

The current Human Resources staff is responsible for providing the delivery of a full service Human Resources program to and for the County's existing departments and staff. This is no small undertaking considering that the County's work force has 894 benefited full-time and part-time employees, and 241 temporary employees comprised of eight different collective bargaining units, non-represented employee groups and unclassified staff.

The following is a list of functions currently being provided by the Human Resources Department: (The list is not in any order of importance.)

- (1) Employee Selection
  - a. On-Line Application
  - b. Application Screening
  - c. Interviewing
  - d. Applicant/Employee Development Tool (Testing)
  - e. Background Investigation
  - f. Hiring
- (2) Exit Interviews
- (3) Employee Training and Development
  - a. GOLD (Growth Opportunities in Learning and Development)
  - b. Leadership Development
  - c. New Employee Orientation
  - d. Compliance Training
  - e. DiSC Assessment
- (4) Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- (5) Labor Relations
  - a. Grievances
  - b. Grievance Discipline Data Base
  - c. Contract Negotiations
  - d. Contract Administration
- (6) Equal Employment Opportunity
- (7) Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- (8) Benefits Administration
  - a. Health Insurance
  - b. Health Savings Account (HSA)
  - c. Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
  - d. Employee Wellness Program
  - e. Dental Insurance
  - f. Vision Insurance
  - g. Tuition Reimbursement
  - h. 457 Deferred Compensation Plan
  - i. Workers Compensation

- j. MERS
  - k. Life Insurance
  - l. Salary Wage Continuation (STD/LTD)
  - m. Family Medical Leave Act
- (9) Employee Recognition
  - (10) Wage Evaluation & Classification Study
  - (11) Unemployment Insurance
  - (12) Payroll Maintenance
  - (13) Security System Maintenance for County Buildings and Courts

Many of the functions of the department are difficult to quantify. For instance, within the function of Benefits Administration the department answers numerous employee questions during the course of a year amounting to a significant expenditure of time. However, it is not feasible to keep detailed statistics regarding the numbers, duration or subject matter of such calls. Several functions are more easily quantifiable and are given in the remainder of this report. Following are highlights of the activities in many of the major Human Resources Department's functions for 2010.

### **EMPLOYEE SELECTION**

The advertising of positions and the receipt of all employment applications is the responsibility of the Human Resources Department. A very detailed procedure for the various departments to follow in the hiring process was developed by the Human Resources Department and is outlined in Policy HR-04 Employee Selection Policy. Human Resources monitors and assures that selection policies and procedures are being followed by the individual departments. In 2008, the On-Line Application process was developed to streamline the application/interviewing/hiring process. Currently, the Human Resources Generalist arranges and coordinates the employee selection process with the help of a Human Resources Technician. In 2010 Human Resources maintained the "Job Hotline" (88 hits), an automated phone answering system through which callers can learn details about vacant County positions. Given the on-line application process and County website, the Job Hotline was eliminated in August, 2010.

In response to one hundred forty-one (141) positions posted by the County in 2010, four thousand one hundred and sixty three (4163) applications were received and screened. In 2010, the department conducted four hundred ninety three (493) employment interviews resulting in the hiring of one hundred thirty-seven (137) employees. Of those one hundred thirty-seven (137) hires, thirty-nine (39) were promotions or transfers of existing employees and ninety-eight (98) were new (external) hires.

### **APPLICANT TESTING**

The Human Resources Department provides a variety of computerized assessment tools to assist hiring managers in screening qualified applicants. The new testing system which was implemented in 2009 tests candidates in a variety of specific software programs (Word, Excel, etc.), as well as skills such as spelling, grammar, reading comprehension, math, data entry and typing.

## **CAREER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

In 2010, Human Resources staff worked closely with the IT Department and Webtecs to design and develop the CRM System, an updated online version of the paper hire slip process. This system will allow hiring managers to send electronic hiring requests automatically when a candidate is selected in the online application system. This will trigger a workflow process that is visible to both the hiring department and Human Resources, tracking the new hire from the time an initial offer is made, through background checks, pre-employment physicals, paperwork requirements, and orientation. This eliminates the need for paperwork couriered back and forth between departments, as well as numerous phone calls and e-mail updates that currently happen to keep the hiring managers informed of progress. The system will also allow for much more convenient processing of position status changes, annual renewals, and funding changes. A great deal of time was put into the development of this new system, and it is anticipated that the process will be fully operational in early 2011.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENT DATABASE**

In 2010, the departments of the County Clerk's Office, County Administration and Human Resources worked closely with WebTecs, Inc. to design, develop and institute an on-line application database for Board Appointments. This database allows for the automation of the posting of open appointments, on-line application for Board appointments, and maintaining/archiving of past and present information. The system was developed in response to an identified need to modernize and streamline the county's board appointment process. The on-line database saves paper, makes applications readily available to designated county board members for interviewing, and stores statistics. As a component of the new database/application system, emails and letters are generated automatically to the applicants informing them of our receipt of their application, thereby providing a timely response to everyone who applies for an appointment with the county, and notifies the applicant of appointment when reviewed by the Board of Commissioners.

## **EXIT INTERVIEWS**

In addition to conducting employment interviews the Human Resources Department also conducts an extensive exit interview process. Exit interviews are conducted in an effort to gain information that will result in better selection and training practices, improve working conditions, enhance supervision, and in general, further public relations by having the employee leave with a positive view of the employer. The exit interview can also be used to identify possible salary and benefit deficiencies, EEO violations, and other areas of potential legal liability.

In 2010, sixty-seven (67) full/part-time employees and seventy-seven (77) temporary employees, inclusive of twenty-one (21) retirees and one (1) laid-off employee, separated from County employment. The turnover rate for full and part-time employees was 7.4% in 2010. Ottawa County continues to represent stability as an employer to our labor force.

## EMPLOYEE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

### **GOLD Standard Training**

The GOLD Standard Training Program continued to expand in 2010. A move toward more in-house training for maximum cost-effectiveness resulted in the new development of classes such as DiSC, Team Building, Business Writing and Grammar, Documentation & Discipline, Behavioral Interviewing, Hiring, Cultural Diversity for Law Enforcement, Time Management, Delegation, and FMLA.



During the 2010 calendar year, we reached the one hundred (100) employee mark with our GOLD Standard Leaders program. At the end of 2010, one hundred eighteen (118) employees had completed this three (3) month program that includes learning sessions and small group discussions centered around identified core competencies for all Ottawa County current and future supervisors.

The use of the online DiSC Assessment tool as a core piece of our GOLD Standard Leaders training has resulted in a number of departmental classes and programs in this area. At the end of 2010, nearly five hundred (500) employees had completed the DiSC assessment and initial training. This tool provides insight into our own natural behavioral tendencies, as well as information on understanding others' behavioral styles. This allows us to explore topics such as improved communication, better teamwork, conflict resolution, group culture, leadership, and more.

In 2010, specific department classes were conducted in Juvenile Detention, District Court, Probation/Community Corrections, Fiscal Services, County Clerk's Office, Equalization, Human Resources, Prosecutor's Office, Register of Deeds Office, Treasurer's Office, Information Technology, Sheriff's Office, Community Mental Health, Public Health, and Parks and Recreation. Many of these departments have established ongoing team training built from the DiSC assessment.

In 2010, one hundred sixty-five (165) training classes were conducted (multi-session classes like Spanish, GOLD Leaders, etc. are only counted as one class); one thousand, six hundred and four (1604) attendees participated in those classes. Since the inception of the program in 2008, four hundred thirty-six (436) classes have been conducted. At this time, one thousand twenty-seven (1027) unique employees have taken at least one class through the GOLD program, resulting in an eighty-eight percent (88%) participation rate of our entire workforce.

The GOLD Standard Training program is continually finding ways to create an ongoing culture of personal and professional development for all Ottawa County employees.

### **Online Training**

Another new addition to our training and development program was the development of enhanced online training in 2010. We developed new online training programs in the areas of bloodborne pathogens, harassment, and LEIN (in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office). This option was utilized to complete required training in bloodborne pathogens for over six hundred (600) employees, harassment training for one hundred fifty (150) employees, and LEIN training

for one hundred seventy-five (175) employees, eliminated many hours of classroom instruction and allowing for easier record keeping. Additional online training is currently being developed.

### **New Employee Orientation**

We unveiled a new and updated New Employee Orientation in 2010. The new structure is more of a modular approach, enabling employees to attend just the sections that are relevant based on the needs of their position. The new format includes general county information on the structure, departments, and functions of our organization; training in the areas of preventing harassment, bloodborne pathogens, and policies and procedures; hands-on Lotus Notes training; phone training; a tour of the Fillmore facility; and information on all employee benefits.

New Employee Orientation sessions are currently being conducted twice a month, but employees can start work prior to orientation, a practice that has provided a great deal more flexibility to the hiring managers. Often employees start in their new department for a few days, before attending their orientation session.

### **Bloodborne Pathogen Control Plan**

Human Resources took over the duties of the BBP Control Plan from Public Health in late 2009. During the 2010 calendar year, the full plan was completely revised and updated. This included new procedures for training, exposures, and recordkeeping, as well as completely updated lists of positions requiring annual training and Hepatitis B vaccines. Although the control plan had been reviewed over the years, numerous tables, attachments and forms were outdated. The new control plan will be maintained by Human Resources and updated annually. Annual training requirements will also be handled by the HR Department.

### **Wage and Classification Study**

A new wage study evaluation team was formed and trained in 2010 to point value the jobs that had not been reviewed in the original study, including the County Clerk's Office, Prosecutor's Office, and Community Mental Health. New job descriptions were created for positions in the Prosecutor's Office and Clerk's Office. Community Mental Health jobs will be evaluated in early 2011.

### **Tuition Reimbursement Program**

In 2010, the Tuition Reimbursement Program was suspended due to budget constraints.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE**

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) are designed to help employees and often their families recognize and overcome personal problems that are interfering with the employee's work performance. EAP's are designed to reach performance problems that cannot be remedied by training, education, or other employer-controlled factors. Examples of the many personal problems that an EAP may deal with are alcohol/drug abuse, emotional problems and marital issues. An effective EAP may help control employee turnover, absenteeism, and other costs associated with personal problems such as health care. Even though the employer pays for the service and may make referrals to the program, all information is held in strict confidence between the employee and the EAP. Ottawa County's EAP provider is the Employee Assistance Center (EAC).

## **LABOR RELATIONS**

### **Contract Negotiations**

In 2010 the Human Resources Department successfully negotiated five (5) of the eight (8) Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA's) which expired at the end of 2010. The remaining three CBA's were negotiated and a Tentative Agreement was reached within the first ninety (90) days of 2011.

### **Grievances**

Two (2) grievances, concerning contract interpretation, were filed in 2010. Both were resolved at "Step 2" (at Department level) of the Grievance Process.

### **Contract Administration**

Throughout 2010, Human Resources staff worked closely with County Department and Court supervisors on various contract interpretation issues.

## **BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION**

### **Health Insurance**

During 2010 the Human Resources Department in conjunction with the Administrators Office and Fiscal Services conducted an in-depth review of the current employee benefits and health insurance plans, including vision, dental, life insurance and long term disability (LTD).

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was developed to seek out a benefits consultant to assist in the review, design and bidding out in the area of employee benefits for all Ottawa County employees and retirees. The consultant was charged with, among other services, reviewing and recommending benefit plan design, cost trending and benchmarking; vendor bidding for insurance and administrative services; monitoring and analyzing current contracts and plan documents; making recommendations based upon review of plans for quality benefits provided, cost effectiveness, funding analysis, market competitiveness and plan administration.

The RFP was issued in April and responses were received from fifteen vendors. The Administrators Office and Human Resources reviewed the responses and recommended accepting the Gallagher Benefits Services proposal based on their methodology, resources, projected timeline, experience and cost. The Gallagher Benefits methodology focused on the four needs of Ottawa County. Those needs were cost reduction, plan options, plan design and a focus on wellness. The bids submitted ranged from simple vendor bidding to three year plans administration for the County. Gallagher's bid was impressive because they would allocate resources to complete the study by August which would allow for changes to be made for the 2011 budget along with a January 1, 2011 plan year change.

As a result of the consultants review, design and bidding of the County's health, dental, vision, life, and LTD plans, the County made the determination to move from self-funded to fully funded insurance plans, choosing Priority Health as the provider for the health insurance, Delta Dental for the dental insurance and National Vision Administrators for the vision. In addition, Human Resources staff held meetings and entered into contracts with the providers of the Life Insurance and Long Term Disability plans and the TPA for the Section 125 Plans (Flexible spending accounts).

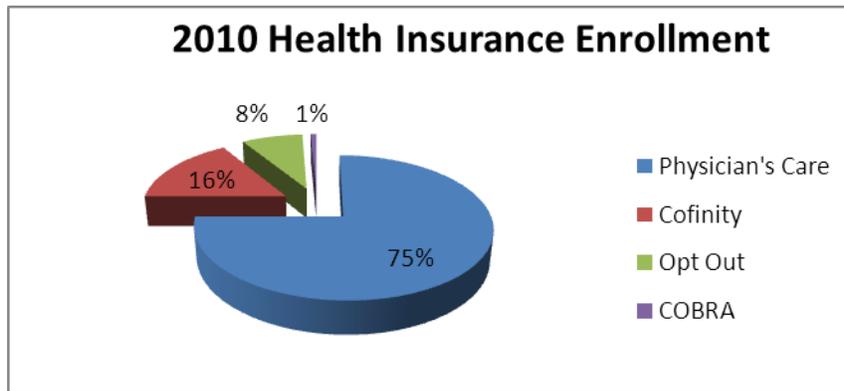
Throughout the month of October Human Resources staff worked with Priority Health representatives and conducted 12 informational meetings around the county for all employees

and retirees. These meetings were to educate and review the three health plan options that employees and retirees would have to choose from during open enrollment in November, to be effective for the plan year beginning January 1, 2011. Following these meetings, Human Resources staff conducted open enrollment for all employees, dependents and retirees, in addition to working closely with representatives from Fifth/Third Bank to set up and fund the health savings accounts that accompanied the high deductible health plan members enrolled into.

In 2010, the average number of active employees enrolled in the County Health Plan was eight hundred twenty one (821). There were fifty four (54) retirees enrolled under the age of 65 and ten (10) over the age of 65 in our health plan. There were seven (7) people on COBRA.

Through the use of Section 125 Flexible Spending Accounts, three hundred nineteen (319) participants were enrolled in the medical flexible spending, which reflects an increase of three (3) participants, and thirty one (31) participants were enrolled in dependent care, which reflects a decrease of four (4) participants. Automatic withdrawal for premium payment of retiree health was introduced in 2000 and 91% percent of the retirees utilized this service in 2010.

Below is a summary of the 2010 health plan enrollment.



### EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Since 1988 the County has conducted an employee recognition program that consists of an annual Service Awards Banquet held each year in January. In 2009, the switch was made to hold the banquet in October for more favorable weather. The banquet recognizes employees who have reached employment milestones of five (5), ten (10), fifteen (15), twenty (20), etc. years with the County.

On October 13, 2010, two hundred fifty-two (252) people attended the Service Awards Banquet honoring one hundred seventy-nine (179) award recipients and eighteen (18) retirees from October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010. The total cost for the banquet was \$24,313.71.

### SECURITY SYSTEM

Ottawa County has thirteen facilities in which the access is controlled by the Midstate proximity card access security system. Human Resources oversees and maintains this security system for approximately 292 access controlled doors. In 2010, two new buildings were added to this system, Hemlock Crossing Nature Education Center and Grand Haven Courthouse. Between these two buildings, one hundred and thirty-one (131) doors were added to the system.