
Recruitment and Selection

1000.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the recruiting, selection, training and retention processes utilized by the Blue Ridge Fire District. This policy supplements any rules that govern employment practices for the Blue Ridge Fire District.

1000.2 POLICY

In accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law, the Blue Ridge Fire District provides equal opportunities for applicants and district members regardless of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and any other classification or status protected by law. The District does not show partiality or grant any special status to any applicant, member, or group of members unless otherwise required by law.

1000.3 RECRUITMENT

The Administration Division should employ a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy to recruit and select members from a qualified and diverse pool of candidates.

The strategy should include:

- (a) Identification of racially and culturally diverse target markets.
- (b) Use of marketing strategies to target diverse applicant pools.
- (c) Expanded use of technology and maintenance of a strong internet presence. This may include an interactive district website and the use of district-managed social networking sites, if resources permit.
- (d) Expanded outreach through partnerships with media, community groups, citizen academies, local colleges, universities and the military.
- (e) Member referral and recruitment incentive programs.
- (f) Consideration of shared or collaborative regional testing processes.

The Administration Division shall avoid advertising, recruiting and screening practices that tend to stereotype, focus on homogeneous applicant pools or screen applicants in a discriminatory manner.

The District should strive to facilitate and expedite the screening and testing process, and should periodically inform each candidate of his/her status in the recruiting process.

1000.4 SELECTION PROCESS

The District shall actively strive to identify a diverse group of candidates that have in some manner distinguished themselves as being outstanding prospects. Minimally, the District should employ

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a comprehensive screening, background investigation, and selection process that assesses cognitive and physical abilities and includes review and verification of the following:

- A comprehensive application for employment (including previous employment, references, current and prior addresses, education, military record)
- Driving record
- Reference checks
- Employment eligibility, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and acceptable identity and employment authorization documents (documentation may be requested upon hire)
- Information obtained from public internet sites
- Financial history consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) and Arizona law (15 USC § 1681 et seq.; ARS § 44-1692)
- Local, state, and federal criminal history record checks
- Polygraph or voice stress analyzer (VSA) examination (when legally permissible)
- Medical and psychological examination (may only be given after a conditional offer of employment)
- Review board or selection committee assessment

1000.4.1 VETERAN PREFERENCE

The District will provide veteran preference points as required (ARS § 38-492).

1000.5 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION

Every candidate shall undergo a thorough background investigation to verify his/her personal integrity and high ethical standards, and to identify any past behavior that may be indicative of the candidate's unsuitability to perform duties relevant to the operation of the Blue Ridge Fire District.

1000.5.1 NOTICES

The Administration Division shall ensure that investigations are conducted and notices provided in accordance with the requirements of the FCRA and the Arizona consumer reporting law (15 USC § 1681d; ARS § 44-1693).

1000.5.2 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Criminal background information, whether directly from the Arizona Department of Public Safety Criminal History Records Section or provided by a third party, may have restrictions on the access, use, security and release of the information. The Administration Division shall establish procedures to ensure compliance with any applicable requirements and security limitations.

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1000.5.3 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Due to the potential for accessing unsubstantiated, private or protected information, the Administration Division should not require candidates to provide passwords, account information or access to password-protected social media accounts.

The Administration Division should consider utilizing the services of an appropriately trained and experienced third party to conduct open source, internet-based searches and/or review information from social media sites to ensure that:

- The legal rights of candidates are protected.
- Material and information to be considered are verified, accurate and validated.
- The District fully complies with applicable privacy protections and local, state and federal law.

Regardless of whether a third party is used, the Administration Division should ensure that potentially impermissible information is not available to any person involved in the candidate selection process.

1000.5.4 RECORDS RETENTION

The background report and all supporting documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

1000.5.5 DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING

The background investigator shall summarize the results of the background investigation in a report that includes sufficient information to allow the reviewing authority to decide whether to extend a conditional offer of employment. The report shall not include any information that is prohibited from use, including that from social media sites, in making employment decisions. The report and all supporting documentation shall be included in the candidate's background investigation file.

1000.6 DISQUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

As a general rule, performance indicators and candidate information and records shall be evaluated by considering the candidate as a whole, and taking into consideration the following:

- Age at the time the behavior occurred
- Passage of time
- Patterns of past behavior
- Severity of behavior
- Probable consequences if past behavior is repeated or made public
- Likelihood of recurrence
- Relevance of past behavior to public safety employment
- Aggravating and mitigating factors

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- Other relevant considerations

A candidate's qualifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, using a totality-of-the-circumstances framework.

1000.7 EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

All candidates shall meet the minimum standards required by state law. Candidates will be evaluated based on merit, ability, competence and experience, in accordance with the high standards of integrity and ethics valued by the District and the community.

Validated, job-related and nondiscriminatory employment standards shall be established for each job classification and shall minimally identify the training, abilities, knowledge and skills required to perform the position's essential duties in a satisfactory manner (see the Position Descriptions Policy). Each standard should include performance indicators for candidate evaluation. The Fire Chief should maintain validated standards for all positions.

Selection standards for promotional opportunities are detailed in the Promotions and Transfers Policy.

1000.7.1 STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Generally, the standards may include the following requirements. The candidate should:

- Be at least 18 years of age by the closing date of the recruitment period.
- Be in possession of a high school diploma or a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).
- Have good vision in both eyes, with the ability to distinguish Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) color codes for hazardous materials (e.g., blue, red, yellow, white), and have no depth or peripheral vision impairment.
- Meet the objectives and minimum standards established in the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)/International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative or similar validated health screening process.
- Meet the minimum standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- Be in possession of, or have the ability to obtain, a valid state driver license in the class required for the position sought.
- Be a U.S. citizen or have proof of a legal right to work in the U.S.

1000.8 TRAINING

All entry-level firefighter candidates should complete training in an accredited fire training program established by the Arizona Center for Fire Service Excellence.

1000.9 RETENTION

The primary focus should be on hiring those who are the best fit for a particular position. In order to retain quality members, the District should:

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- Seek member input on retention strategies.
- Develop a workplace that respects, encourages and enables a work/life balance.
- Facilitate training and career development opportunities.
- Develop and maintain quality supervisors.
- Provide regular and meaningful performance feedback.
- Promote an environment where members are able to speak freely.
- Treat members fairly, equitably and consistently.
- Consider ways to reward excellent performance.
- Follow up on any feedback acquired during an exit interview process.

Retention incentives may include items from a collective bargaining agreement, employment benefits, seniority benefits, forms of recognition, etc.