

# City of Somerville

## Non-Civil Service Hiring Policy

### **PURPOSE**

The policy reflects the City's non-civil service recruitment and candidate selection policy to ensure the City of Somerville fills vacancies with the best qualified candidates in a timely manner.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The City of Somerville is committed to maintaining an inclusive working environment that values the diverse backgrounds and characteristics of all people. The City of Somerville has career opportunities for a diverse range of professionals and skillsets to reflect the culturally rich community we serve daily. We enforce the City's mission of upholding progressive principles for residents and employees by embedding diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging into every step of the hiring process. We embrace and encourage an innovative, empowering, and collaborative workplace culture in a fast-paced, challenging environment. These values are integral to the City's provision of services and broad vision for its future.

The City of Somerville believes in equal opportunity in employment practices without discrimination on the grounds of race (including traits historically associated with race, including but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles, religion, color, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, marital status, genetics, active military personnel, pregnancy, source of income or family status.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Human Resources (HR) department is responsible for ensuring the City's employment practices conform to Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and HR policies. City departments work in partnership with the HR Recruitment Team in the candidate selection and hiring process.

### **HIRING PROCESS**

At the time a position vacancy occurs, the City's HR department will ask the hiring manager to review the job description and update the required qualifications. The Human Resources Department will review the updated job description and specifications for compliance with job requirements. Additionally, where applicable, the position may be reclassified by Human Resources based on changes made by the hiring department.

## **ADVERTISING**

The City will recruit through advertising to, and sourcing passive candidates from an expansive geographic area. The City will leverage partnerships with community groups, school and educational groups, professional affiliations, and affinity organizations to strive for a rich pool of diverse, qualified candidates. Somerville residents are especially encouraged to apply to job openings in the City.

In cases where the City does not generate an adequate candidate pool, the City may extend the search to further expand the candidate pool or fail the search and repost the position.

## **APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT**

All candidates applying for employment in the City of Somerville must submit a job application online on the City's career page or complete a job application in paper form. Paper applications are located at the Human Resources Department.

The hiring team will review with hiring managers all job applications and select the most qualified applicants for an interview. Some candidates who meet the minimum qualifications for a position may not be interviewed if other applicants in the pool are more qualified.

## **INTERVIEW PROCESS**

1. During the candidate selection process, the hiring department and the HR Recruitment Team collaborate to identify candidates who meet the minimum qualifications to proceed with either phone screenings and/or subsequent panel interviews.
2. Interview panels consist of representatives from the hiring department, the HR Recruitment Team, and other relevant departments.
3. The City may administer job skills examinations to candidates applying for job vacancies in the City. Examinations can be written, oral or both. Human Resources considers this screening information to be a personnel record, but candidates should understand that this information, or a redacted version of it, may be a public record.
4. Final candidates are required to complete a formal employment history application and submit three professional references, with at least one being a supervisor. Family members and friends are considered personal, not professional, references and not considered.
5. The Mayor is the hiring authority in the City who approves all hires and may conduct an additional final interview as appropriate.

## **CONDITIONAL OFFER AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENINGS**

All offers of employment are contingent upon the success of the following screening requirements:

- Successful and timely completion of professional reference checks
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks, and/or background checks, as applicable
- MA State Ethics Training Program
- Driving history check (if required by essential functions of the job)
- Drug screen check (if required by essential functions of the job)
- Department of Transportation (DOT) physical exam (if required by essential functions of the job)
- Physical examination by City medical professional (as required by essential functions of the job)

These screening requirements are processed after a conditional offer of employment has been extended to the applicant. New hires who will perform safety sensitive functions (such as running a camp or using motorized equipment) are required to successfully pass a drug screen, subject to this Policy's Medical Marijuana procedures. At no time should an employee begin work until the Director of Human Resources or designee has verified results of the completion of professional reference checks, CORI background check, ethics training, driving history (if applicable), physical/DOT physical (if applicable), and drug screen (if applicable).

**REHIRES:** Rehired candidates who have not physically worked and/or been paid by the City for longer than 6 months must successfully complete and/or pass any applicable pre-employment items identified above.

#### **AUTHORIZATION BY APPLICANT**

The candidate must authorize the CORI background checks, physical (if applicable), driving history (if applicable), fingerprinting (if applicable) and drug screen (if applicable) by completing the appropriate forms. The candidate must complete the CORI authorization form to initiate the City's background checks.

**Note:** Candidates for the position of per diem poll worker and academic interns will be subject to a CORI check but are exempt from references or MA State Ethics Training Program requirements.

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

The City of Somerville conducts background checks on candidate's post-offer (conditional offer). The City of Somerville may also use a third-party administrator to conduct background checks. For purposes of this policy, a "background check" may mean a CORI check, education verification, employment history confirmation, credit history for financial positions, public web-based information, public information review, and professional references. The City conducts background checks to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the candidate and determine their suitability for employment.

The City of Somerville takes precautions to ensure that background checks comply with applicable federal and state statutes, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act. All criminal background checks are conducted post-offer (conditional offer). Candidates who have events on their background screen will be assessed pursuant to the City's CORI policy.

In addition to the above, the City will generate a driving history report for all candidates conditionally offered a position that requires safe operation of a motor vehicle, regardless if it is a City vehicle or a personal vehicle.

## **DRUG TESTING AND MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

The City will evaluate a positive drug test result for the use of marijuana in accordance with this section. In the event that a candidate has applied for a safety-sensitive position, has a positive marijuana test result and can produce a valid medical marijuana card, the City will engage in an interactive dialog around alternate treatment options. Should an alternative option be available and acceptable to the candidate, the employee's hire date may be delayed until they have successfully taken and passed a drug screen within 45 days of implementing the alternative treatment option. However, if there is no alternative to the use of marijuana or the employee continues to test positive for marijuana after the implementation of alternative treatment, the City will withdraw its employment offer.

Any candidate the City rejects due to a positive drug test will be removed from the hiring process, and the City will not consider the applicant for employment with the City of Somerville for a period of six months from the date of the positive drug test.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

Candidates conditionally hired into jobs that have certain physical duties will be required to undergo a physical examination as a condition of employment, at the City's expense. Positions requiring this screening will be marked as such on the posting. The examining physician shall advise the Human Resources Director or their designee as to whether or not, in their professional opinion, the applicant is physically qualified to perform the duties of the position for which the City has made a conditional offer.

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of the applicant's ability to work legally in the United States. Prior to a new hire's first day of work, they will be asked to provide original

documents verifying their right to work and, as required by federal law, to sign federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. If the applicant, at any time, cannot verify their right to work in the United States, the City of Somerville may need to terminate employment.

Prior to or on a new hire's first working day, they will be asked to complete employment paperwork in the City Human Resources office. Copies of documentation will be required for this paperwork to be completed. A new hire will be required to present any of the following listed documents for verification by Human Resources: a valid driver's license, social security card and/or United States issued passport.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Candidates must complete the MA State Ethics Training at prior to their first day of work. Information on this requirement is found here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/complete-the-conflict-of-interest-law-education-requirements>

### **BENEFITS**

The City of Somerville offers health insurance, life insurance, dental insurance, retirement plans and other benefits to permanent full and part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week. Please see the [benefits section](#) on the City's Human Resources Department web page for detailed up to date information: <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/human-resources/benefits>

### **ANNIVERSARY DATE**

A new hire's first day of work is their official anniversary date. The City uses the anniversary date to compute various conditions and benefits. Seniority dates may vary according to the various employee Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and should be consulted.

### **EARLY EVALUATION PERIOD (EEP)**

The City regards the early evaluation period as an integral part of the new employee process and shall be utilized by supervisors and Department Heads for closely observing the employee's work and conduct, establishing supervisory and work product expectations, securing the most effective adjustment of a new employee or a current employee to a new position, and counseling an employee whose performance does not meet the required work standards, which may include discipline or discharge.

Every person hired or appointed to a full-time or part-time classified position must undergo an early evaluation period to enable the Department Head to observe the employee's ability to perform the various principal duties and provide contemporaneous job feedback to the

employee. Department Heads conduct performance evaluations at a minimum of two intervals during the early evaluation period, once at the approximate mid-point of the EEP and once at the end. The Department Head may elect to conduct more frequent performance evaluations during the EEP at their discretion.

The early evaluation period begins immediately upon assumption of duties or promotion. Prior to the end of the early evaluation period, the Department Head may recommend that the early evaluation period be extended to allow the Department Head to conduct additional performance evaluations or allow more time for the Department Head to work with the employee. If an employee's job is temporarily interrupted during the early evaluation period, upon return, they will be required to complete the remainder of the early evaluation period.