

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
DIVISION OF RISK MANAGEMENT
BRIDGE TO SUCCESS PROGRAM
SUMMER 2015



SECTION I

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Bridge to Success (BTS) program is an alternative employment selection program for persons with developmental disabilities. It is designed to minimize the adverse impact of the traditional selection process by providing an alternate means of assessing the qualifications and skills of job applicants with disabilities. The BTS program will be launched as a pilot program in its first year of existence. This allows the participating departments, Risk Management, Human Resources (HR) and the BTS committee to identify and evaluate aspects of the program on a small scale to understand how a large scale project might work in practice. The pilot program also allows us to address issues as they arise and make informed decisions in consideration of program expansion.

Positions in the BTS Program are project non-Merit System positions within Contra Costa County (the County). The candidates filling the BTS positions are subject to a six month evaluation period. If the candidate performs the essential functions of the job satisfactorily during the evaluation period, he or she may be transitioned to a permanent and classified Merit System position, following Board approval.

The BTS Program is consistent with the County's overall commitment to the diversification and inclusion of people who have developmental disabilities within our workforce.

SECTION II

ELIGIBILITY

In order for an individual to participate in this program, the candidate must meet the definition of an "Individual with a Disability," as defined by the Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code section 12926), and be certified eligible for the program by a State of California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) Counselor as having a developmental disability. The certification must indicate the person's disability and be signed by both the counselor and the person seeking to participate in the program. The candidate must also meet the minimum qualifications for the position sought.

SECTION III

HIRING PROCESS

The selection process for the Bridge to Success Program is critical to the County's overall commitment to the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in our workforce. The following guidelines have been developed to better assist staff with the selection process.

A. Designation of Positions

The positions that have been identified for the pilot program are Institutional Services Worker (ISW) (job code 1KVD), Institutional Services Aide (ISA) (job code 1KWC) and Library Aide (job code 3KW4). During the pilot program, the Health Services Department and Library anticipate creating at least two BTS temporary project positions within each class. If vacancies become available in permanent positions, additional BTS positions may be created, but only after permanent employees are given the opportunity to request reassignment to vacant permanent positions in the same classification or in the same level of their deep classification. All permanent vacancies will be offered for bid to presently assigned full-time, part-time and permanent-intermittent employees for reassignment. When there is a vacancy in one of the BTS assigned classifications, and no permanent employee chooses to bid, the hiring process identified in Section III may be followed.

B. Requesting Applications

Job openings will be relayed by departments to both Risk Management and HR. Risk Management will relay the information to the DOR via email and request that they respond in no later than 10 business days as to whether they have candidates who meet the minimum qualifications. If the DOR has candidates who meet the minimum qualifications, the candidate will be asked to complete an application and submit it to HR.

C. Application Review

HR will screen all applicants for minimum qualifications and eligibility for participation. HR will contact the departmental hiring manager and ADA Coordinator to advise of potential candidates. Departments will review the applications of all BTS candidates in the qualified pool. Upon review, departmental representatives will select at least three (3), if available, candidates to participate in interviews.

D. Interview Process

Interviews will be scheduled by the hiring department. Any accommodation requests from candidates should be handled in accordance with the County's ADA policy. The departments will work with Susan Skamser, ADA Coordinator, and the departmental ADA representative to address the accommodation request.

Some candidates may seek support from community based organizations and supported employment services, such as an advocate or job coach, as they go through the interview and selection process. If so, the candidate may list on the reference section of his or her application the name, phone number, and e-mail of the advocate or

job coach at such agencies or others. A designated person in Risk Management will coordinate the communication with both the candidate and his or her designated advocate or job coach in such cases for the department.

The advocate or job coach may serve in one or more of the following ways:

- Provide interview preparation assistance prior to interview
- Be present and provide “moral” support to the applicant during the interview process
- Ask for clarification of questions from the panel members
- Re-state interview question(s) to better assist the applicant in answering
- Prompt the candidate to respond as appropriate and necessary.

It is recommended that BTS candidates, along with their advocate or job coach as necessary, be provided with the interview questions 30 minutes prior to their interview. This will help facilitate the interviews by providing candidates time to consider their job related experiences as they relate to the questions with their advocate or job coach. It will also help meet the objective of hearing directly from each candidate during the interview process.

After the completion of scheduled interviews, departments may select a qualified candidate recommended for hire and advise the departmental Personnel Officer, ADA Coordinator, HR, and Risk Management.

E. Placement

The departmental ADA Coordinator will work with the supervisor to determine if the placement is appropriate once a candidate has been selected. If the placement is considered to be appropriate, the necessary paperwork will be submitted to HR to place the individual in the position as a BTS appointment. If the placement is not considered appropriate, HR will follow the regular protocol to fill the position.

SECTION IV **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

All individuals selected under this program will be appointed to temporary positions as project employees. The temporary appointment status will last for the duration of the evaluation period which is six months unless sooner ended. During the evaluation period, BTS employees will receive the same salary and benefits that any other similarly situated project employee receives. If the BTS employee successfully passes his or her evaluation period, the unclassified temporary position may be converted to a classified Merit System position. This will require the department to seek permission from the

Board of Supervisors to convert the project position under the BTS program to a permanent position once the candidate successfully completes the six month evaluation period.

SECTION V EVALUATION PERIOD

The purpose of the six month on-the-job performance evaluation period is to assess the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals who have been selected for temporary/project employment. Candidates must successfully demonstrate their ability to perform the essential functions of the job, with or without a reasonable accommodation, in order to successfully complete their BTS evaluation. The BTS Committee will develop an evaluation form which will be reviewed and approved by Risk Management and HR.

The six month evaluation period is utilized as the means of determining that the BTS employee is demonstrating necessary minimum skills and work behaviors appropriate to the position.

Some BTS employees will be assigned an advocate or job coach through the DOR or an outside agency. The job coach will work directly with the supervisor and the employee, and may receive assistance from Risk Management. The job coach's function is to help the employee succeed by helping the employee understand all aspects of the job while also guiding the manager/supervisor regarding needs of the employee. Job coaches typically stay as long as is needed. The County does not pay for the job coach. The coach is paid through the DOR or another independent agency.

The supervisor is responsible for monitoring the progress of the candidate during the evaluation period. The supervisor should evaluate the BTS candidate every other month during the evaluation period and document the evaluations on the approved form. The evaluation will contain the supervisor's assessment of the candidate's performance.

Problematic areas should be discussed with the candidate and the job coach who will assist the employee in understanding the nuances of the job. Arrangements can be made to provide needed reasonable accommodations or additional training for the candidate.

SECTION VI THE TERMINATION PROCESS

The termination process for BTS project employees is the same as it is for other project employees.