

# Bridge to Success

Update to the H2O Committee

March 2022



# What is Bridge to Success

- ▶ A program that provides an employment path for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities without going through the competitive merit process.
- ▶ Launched as a pilot program on January 1, 2017, to minimize the adverse impact of traditional selection procedures on people with developmental disabilities

# How did the pilot process work?

- ▶ Candidates with a letter from Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) regarding their disability status apply online to the BTS-specific open recruitment and attach their letter from DOR
- ▶ Candidates who meet the program requirements are guaranteed an interview
- ▶ Interview questions are provided in advance for interview prep
- ▶ A job coach is allowed to attend the interview with the candidate
- ▶ A job coach partners with candidate onsite after hire as much or as long as needed to acclimate to the role

# Pilot Program Design for Position Status

- ▶ Use project positions for a 1-year trial period which are exempt from the merit system
- ▶ If candidates are successful, the project position is converted to a merit position through a board order

# Successes

- ▶ We successfully converted two employees from the program into the merit system
- ▶ CBOs were good resources for referring candidates to the program
- ▶ Developed branding for the program, website, and informational materials
- ▶ Established a partnership with the DOR to assist with ensuring candidates qualified for the program

# Challenges

- ▶ Lack of buy in from departments
- ▶ Limited understanding of job classes that may be appropriate for BTS candidates
- ▶ Posting process used in the pilot resulted in a substantial proportion of candidates that were not qualified under the BTS program
- ▶ Inconsistent submission of the required evaluations and providing timely responses to HR inquiries regarding the status of BTS candidates
- ▶ In some cases job coaches were not available and departments didn't understand how to access support from the job coaches to resolve issues
- ▶ Full time assignments did not always align with the needs and capacity of the BTS candidates

# Areas for Improvement

- ▶ Expand scope of the job assignments offered and increase flexibility to better meet the needs of the departments and candidates
- ▶ Design a more sustainable process where successful conversion to the merit system doesn't result in eliminating future BTS positions
- ▶ Enhance reliance on community partners to reduce applications from people who do not have disabilities
- ▶ Provide formal training to departments and the managers/supervisors that will be overseeing staff
- ▶ Establish clearer expectation for communication required from managers and departments that are participating in the BTS program

# Next Steps

- ▶ HR is exploring contracting with a CBO or individual that is more familiar with the IDD community and the state programs to support them in the redesign of the program
- ▶ Through CBO partnerships, we hope to find ways to leverage additional funding resources to have more support for this program
- ▶ Engage departments in planning and designing the next iteration of the program
- ▶ Identify champions throughout county departments to improve adoption and sustainability of the program
- ▶ HR's budget proposal includes adding a position next FY, that in addition to supporting ADA and Leave programs, will provide more technical expertise with regards to the process for finding appropriate job placement for individuals with disabilities