



Human Resources Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources
DATE: February 11, 2025
RE: January 2025 Report

Employee Relations, Recruiting and Benefits:

- Interviews were held for the position of PT Police Officer. In January, the department onboarded two full-time Restoration Technicians, and a Stewardship Specialist.
- The District's seasonal employment opportunities are open for recruitment, and the HR department is training and providing resources to hiring managers to support their selection and orientation processes.
- The District is fully staffed, positioning the department well to tackle other strategic human resources projects that have been delayed or postponed due to regular, active recruitment as well as begin preparing for possible growth in the District's staffing model.
- The Department has also begun to shift its focus to prospective benefits planning, including possible insurance opt-out options, certification pay, uniform allowances, and other opportunities that stem from compensation and classification study recommendations and the competitive employment landscape. Any fully vetted recommendations will be presented for FY25-26 budget consideration; however, it is more likely these will be more fully prepared for the following fiscal year.
- The department has prepared its annual budget requests and expects to present them formally to Administration and Finance for consideration in early February. In addition to evaluating department needs, HR has worked collaboratively with the budget team to consider requests for staff as an outcome of the successful referendum.
- HR is supporting the review and preparation of the third iteration of the Organization Ordinance for the Commission's approval. Once complete, the department expects to present its annual review of the employee handbook for consideration. A comprehensive review has begun.
- Human Resources is in the process of converting its 457k plan with Equitable to a new platform, which is intended to better serve participants and reduce administration time and fees. The Plan will experience a black out period during the month of March, and the department is preparing notification to participants as well as coordinating with the Finance Department for the handling of contribution withholdings during the transition.
- HR completed the annual ACA reporting process and employees received mandatory notices at their homes.
- The Department has begun to review and revise the District's performance management process and tool, and anticipates to pilot a new program for some staff in 2025.
- Department staff participated in in the Riverland's productions process for its Maple Sugaring Days collaboration with the Foundation, attended the Kane County Veteran's Court for learning and to vet a potential partnership, presented at new Commissioner orientation, and attended the IPBC member update and ACA reporting training.

Safety and Wellness:

- With the start of the new calendar year, the HR Department closed out 2024 employee safety training files and developed the 2025 safety training plan for all employees.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator taught OSHA Trench Safety to trades technicians and Co-taught CPR and first aid to staff.
- Department staff participated in an OSHA Extreme Cold webinar to review the federal standards, a PDRMA Risk Management Review webinar to roll out the 2025 safety goals, and the monthly IDPH Ambassador virtual meeting.



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- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator served as a subject matter expert at the planning meeting and site visit for the new Nature Play Space project at LeRoy Oakes, discussing risk management design requirements and making recommendations for the space.
- Human Resources reviewed the Public Safety training mandates and requirements with the Police Department for 2025. Several redundancies were eliminated and a department specific training plan was adopted to improve efficiencies and reduce budget costs. Together, a CPR instructor was sourced to co-teach Red Cross CPR certification for officers that is state compliant.
- The OSHA injury reporting log has been completed and posted and required federal data was submitted to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Volunteer Resources:

- In January, **756.50 volunteer hours at 44 events** were given to the District!
- Dangerously cold temperatures resulted in a number of volunteer event cancelations.
- The HR Department welcomed new Stewardship Specialist Rachel Carlson. Rachel is off to a great start meeting staff, seeing preserves, jumping into trainings and getting out with volunteers! The HR team is excited to have her and look forward to lots of good news and updates from her fieldwork.
- The Volunteer Coordinator supported the Snowmobile Safety Course led by SSP volunteer Ron Julian and Officer Splittgerber at District HQ, and co-taught the District's largest ever 1st aid training course of 12 staff members.
- The Volunteer Coordinator co-presented "Creating Impactful Service for Any Organization" at IAPD in Chicago with fellow panelists from the St. Charles Park District and Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves.



Pictured on the left: Rachel (center) gets a warm welcome from Steward Mary O (right) and the Bliss Woods crew January 25th.

Pictured on the right: Safety Chuck keeps a watchful eye on the large staff 1st session at HQ in Jan 23rd.