



**Santa Barbara Countywide Policy  
Manual**

Subject/Title: <b>Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program Policy</b>	Number:
Responsible Department: County Human Resources	Dept. Reference:
Approved by: Board of Supervisors	
Original Policy: Revisions:	
Meet and Confer Obligations:  All employee organizations	
Scope of Application: This policy applies to all County departments and employees.	

**PURPOSE:**

The goal of this policy is to establish a County employee referral program to enhance recruitment efforts to attract and retain qualified candidates for vacant positions in County job classifications that are designated as difficult-to-fill.

This program rewards regular County employees when a new external candidate is hired into an eligible difficult-to-fill position as a result of their referral. This program serves as motivation for County employees to help recruit friends, family, or former work colleagues and others for difficult-to-fill positions, in exchange for a referral bonus of twelve-hundred dollars (\$1200) per employee referral for classifications designated as eligible for the Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program, subject to the provisions below. Hiring Departments are responsible for funding the referral bonus, with salary savings from the vacant position envisioned as the source of funds.

**COUNTY EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY:**

Most regular County employees in a paid status or on an approved leave of absence are eligible to participate, including probationary employees. The following are not eligible:

- Extra help employees,
- Contractors on payroll,
- Employees whose normal work duties require them to participate in the hiring process (e.g. County Human Resources Department employees who have responsibility for recruiting and testing),
- Departmental Human Resources staff members who participate in the hiring process for a given difficult-to-fill position, and
- Individuals who serve as raters in examinations or who participate in hiring interviews for the difficult-to-fill position.

#### ELIGIBLE CANDIDATE:

A hired candidate is one who is actually interviewed, hired, and begins to work for the County, not just presented for consideration. The candidate must be a new employee, and not currently or previously employed by the County in any capacity (including extra help and contractors on payroll).

It is the referred candidate's responsibility to submit their employment application through the designated County applicant tracking system during the open period of the recruitment for the difficult-to-fill position and to indicate on the application the name of the person(s) who referred them.

#### REFERRAL BONUS:

All current regular County employees that refer a candidate who is ultimately hired into a difficult-to-fill position (as designated as such by the Director of Human Resources) are eligible for a referral bonus of \$1,200. The bonus will be considered taxable income and used in determining the employee's regular rate of pay for FLSA purposes, but not included as compensation for purposes of retirement calculations.

To be eligible for the referral bonus, current regular County employees must complete and submit the online referral form as soon as they know a candidate has applied for the difficult-to-fill position. Only one referral bonus of \$1200 will be paid per hired candidate, though it can be paid to more than one person if multiple County employees refer the same hired candidate. Hired candidates must confirm the referral source through the online application process before a bonus is approved. When one or more employees refers a candidate, the hired candidate's confirmation of who referred them will be the determining factor, but more than one employee can split a single referral bonus of \$1200.

A referral must be confirmed prior to a hired candidate's start date, by matching information from the candidate's online application with information on the County Employee's referral form. Any referrals after the hired candidate's start date will not be accepted. All online submissions of referrals expire one year from the submission date, but

the same candidate can be referred again once the referral expires, if they were not hired through a previous referral.

#### REFERRAL PAYMENT PROCESS:

Once the candidate is hired following an eligible referral and begins County employment, the employee who made the referral will receive an initial payment of \$400. The balance of \$800 will be paid after the new hire has successfully completed a probationary period or 12 months of employment for eligible at-will classifications. If more than one person is listed as referring the hired candidate, each payment will be split equally. Payment will be made to former employees who leave the County in good standing, i.e. voluntarily and unrelated to poor performance or any completed or pending disciplinary action, after the successful completion of a hired referral's probationary period.