

<b>STATE OF ALASKA</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH &amp; SOCIAL SERVICES</b> <b>Division of Public Assistance</b>  <b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE MANUAL</b>	<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Number:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
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	Hiring Freeze FY09		
	<b>SUPERCEDES NUMBER/PAGE:</b>		
	P&P approved on February 6, 2009		
	<b>APPROVED:</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	
	<i>[Signature]</i>	2/25/09	

**PURPOSE:**

To outline the hiring freeze procedures per the Governor's direction.

**POLICY:**

Effective January 23, 2009 the Governor has directed all departments to implement a hiring freeze to reduce the impact on state general funds. The hiring freeze applies to all positions, except for those that are necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans. Departments may request a waiver from the hiring freeze due to extraordinary circumstances.

The attached memorandum from the Chief of Staff, Michael Nizich dated January 23, 2009 and from the Director of OMB, Karen Rehfeld dated February 6, 2009 outlines how the hiring freeze applies to certain positions and how it does not apply to certain situations. If a department believes a position is necessary to protect the public's safety or meet other essential state responsibilities, a request for waiver from the freeze must be submitted to OMB.

Recruitments that are currently on Workplace Alaska will be allowed to expire if not exempt from the freeze. HR has posted the following notification on Workplace Alaska informing potential applicants that a hiring freeze is in place.

**Special Notice: Hiring Freeze Effective 1/23/2009**

The State of Alaska has implemented a hiring freeze effective January 23, 2009. During this hiring freeze only positions necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans and to meet other essential state responsibilities will be filled. Although recruitment will continue for positions posted prior to January 23, 2009, some of these positions may be subject to the current freeze and therefore may not be filled at this time.

Job seekers should continue to visit this site regularly to view and apply for those vacancies exempt from this hiring freeze.

The State of Alaska appreciates your patience during this period of financial uncertainty.

The Division of Public Assistance received a blanket waiver approval for all Field Services Eligibility Technician positions to be exempt from the hiring freeze.

All fully federally funded positions must seek a waiver and be approved by the department's Assistant Commissioner. Please work with the Administrative Officer I on completing the correct memorandum.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

All hiring managers who have/had recruitment postings and will not be seeking a waiver for hire, will be required to notify all applicants that you will not be hiring for the position at this time. You will also need to dispo your recruitment and notify your Recruitment Section that a hire will not be made.

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If you will be seeking a waiver approval, you will need to contract your Administrative Officer I to assist you in completing the necessary memorandum(s).

It will be the responsibility of the hiring manager to submit the approved waiver to the Human Resource Office with the WPA Prior to Post Checklist.

**PROCEDURES:**

- A. If it has been determined that a vacant position has a hiring freeze based upon the memorandum from the Chief of Staff, Michael Nizich dated January 23, 2009 and you feel the position is necessary to protect the public's safety or meet other essential state responsibilities, a waiver memorandum needs to be completed and approved by OMB.
  1. Hiring Manager will seek approval from the Section Chief.
  2. If in Field Services, the hiring manager will first seek approval from Regional Manager & the Regional Manager will forward the request to the Section Chief for approval.
  3. Section Chief will work with the Administrative Officer I to complete waiver memorandum.
  4. The Administrative Officer I will seek the Directors, Commissioners, OMB and Chief of Staff approval.
- B. If a vacant position is 100% federally funded a waiver memorandum needs to be completed and approved by the Assistant Commissioner.
  1. Hiring Manager will seek approval from the Section Chief.
  2. If in Field Services, the hiring manager will seek approval from Regional Manager & Regional Manager will seek approval from Section Chief.
  3. Section Chief will work with the Administrative Officer I to complete waiver memorandum.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Memorandum from Michael Nizich dated January 23, 2009

Memorandum from William H. Hogan dated February 2, 2009.

Memorandum from Karen Rehfeld dated February 6, 2009



State of Alaska  
Sarah Palin, Governor

Office of the Governor  
PO Box 110020  
Juneau AK 99811-0020  
(907) 465-3500, fax 465-3532

To: Commissioners  
Administrative Services Directors

Date: January 23, 2009

From: Michael Nizich  
Chief of Staff



Subject: Purchasing Restriction  
and Hiring Freeze

In her State of the State speech before a joint session of the Alaska Legislature last night, Governor Palin described the period of financial uncertainty due to current oil prices. As you may recall, last spring when the FY2009 budget was finalized, we expected the price of a barrel of oil to average \$83.04 during this fiscal year. The price is currently hovering in the \$30 - \$40 range and is having a significant impact on our state revenues. In light of this, we need to take prudent management actions.

The Governor announced the immediate implementation of a non-essential purchasing restriction and a hiring freeze to reduce the impact on state general funds. Each Commissioner will determine what items are non-essential, but would likely include conference travel, administrative travel, subscriptions, supply or equipment purchases that could be delayed until FY2010, etc. The hiring freeze applies to all positions, except for those that are necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans. Departments may request a waiver from the hiring freeze due to extraordinary circumstances. That process is outlined below.

The hiring freeze applies to:

- All full-time, part-time, non-permanent and seasonal positions in bargaining units and in the partially-exempt and exempt service paid for by general funds and other state funds.
- Requests to establish new non-permanent positions.
- Requests to extend non-permanent positions.
- Positions that provide administrative support and maintenance in 24-hour facilities.
- Positions partially funded by federal funds.

The hiring freeze does not apply to:

- Positions essential to protect Alaska citizens. This includes Alaska State Troopers, corrections and probation officers, airport police and fire officers, airport screening officers, and employees that provide patient and resident services and food service at 24-hour institutions. The following are considered 24-hour institutions:
  - Correctional Facilities
  - Juvenile Justice Facilities
  - Alaska Military Youth Academy
  - Pioneer Homes
  - Alaska Psychiatric Institute
  - AVTEC
  - Mt. Edgecumbe High School
- Positions for which an offer of employment was made prior to January 23, 2009.
- Lateral transfers and promotions within the same department.
- Range changes in flexibly-ranged positions.
- Reclassifications within the same job family.
- Employees delegated the authority to perform the duties of a vacant position that is assigned a higher pay range if bargaining unit provisions or regulations provide for compensation.
- The use of on-call non-permanent employees if only used to perform work essential to protect the public's safety or meet other essential state responsibilities.
- Positions fully funded by federal funds. The Division of Personnel must be sent funding verification from the Commissioner of the requesting department for any new job posting for a position that is 100% federally funded.
- Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation,
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education,
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation,
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority,
- Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission,
- Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
- Permanent Fund Corporation, and
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska.

Recruitments currently on Workplace Alaska will be open through the stated closing date. However, a notice to all applicants will be posted on Workplace Alaska advising applicants of the hiring freeze and stating that only positions necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans and to meet other essential state responsibilities will be filled. A currently posted recruitment will not be extended unless a waiver has been approved.

Positions providing direct patient or resident services (including food services) or that are essential in protecting Alaska citizens, but not employed in a 24-hour institution or in one of the exempt job classifications listed above IS subject to the hiring freeze, but a waiver may be requested.

If a department believes filling a position is necessary to protect the public's safety or meet other essential state responsibilities, a request for waiver from the freeze must be submitted to OMB. The waiver request must be submitted in a memorandum addressed to the Chief of Staff and approved by the department's Commissioner. The memorandum must include the following information:

- position title, range, ADN, annual personal services cost, and fund source (if CIP Receipts, identify the source of the CIP Receipts);
- the essential results that the person will be responsible for delivering;
- the extraordinary circumstances that contribute to why a waiver should be approved; and
- how long the position has been vacant.

When a waiver is approved, the department is responsible for providing a copy of it to their HR Manager in the Division of Personnel.

On behalf of the Governor, please accept her thanks for your cooperation in meeting this challenge.



# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110601  
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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 2, 2009

TO: Karen Rehfeld, Director  
Office of Management & Budget  
Governor's Office

OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

FEB 03 2009

THRU: Alison Elgee  
Assistant Commissioner  
Finance & Management

FROM: William H. Hogan  
Commissioner

SUBJECT: Waivers from the Hiring Freeze ADN 0690340

The Department of Health and social Services deals daily with a variety of vulnerable populations throughout the state. Department employees provide the access to the social services "safety net" which can literally mean the difference between a child being protected or at risk of serious harm, an individual without sufficient personal resources to pay for heat for their homes being safe from the cold or suffering in Alaska's extreme weather conditions, or containment or unchecked public exposure from contagious disease. We have identified 5 areas where we experience high turnover and recruitment difficulties that are critical to the well-being of Alaska's public. While we have many other critical service areas that we may wish to prepare requests for individual position waiver consideration, we have attempted to limit our request in this memo to just those areas where we have need for on-going recruitment. We request consideration for a blanket waiver from the hiring freeze for the following positions under the "critical to public safety" exemption.

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0340

### Office of Children's Services:

**Front Line Case Workers: Social Workers (Class Codes P4143, P4144, P4145, P4146, P4147, P4115) Children's Services Specialists (P4156, P4157, P4158), and Social Services Associates (P4105, P4106)**

Child Protective Services staff (Social Workers and Children's Services Specialists) are first responders to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect. They are expected to make determinations of child safety on a daily basis, in many cases as a result of an emergency call to the agency. In addition to making swift decisions as to whether children have been abused or neglected, these staff must also assess whether those children may remain safely in their own homes or be removed and placed in kinship or foster care for their protection. The work includes coordination with public safety officials and the court system overseeing our actions. Due to the nature of the work being demanding

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and emotionally taxing, there is consistently a 35% turnover and 9% vacancy rate with the Office of Children's Services. It is imperative that a waiver be granted to retain and recruit staff to adequately protect the safety of children across the state.

Social Services Associates provide a wide array of services directly to children and providers related to execution of referrals for medical care, assessments, and federally mandated visitation. They are also key to the process of system data entry. Without this, OCS is not able to claim federal reimbursement for IV-E eligible children and services reverting to 100% general funds.

#### **Community Care Licensing Specialists**

These staff complete the critical licensing function of prospective foster parents. Given that there is already a shortage of available foster homes across the state; to lose the ability to perform these duties will immobilize the child protective services system due to having no available alternative placement options when children must be removed from their homes for their safety and protection. These staff also provide supportive services to existing foster parents, who have taken usually very demanding, unfamiliar and high needs children into their homes. Lastly, without foster homes becoming fully licensed, federal reimbursement of such services will be effected and payment for those services would revert to general funding from the state.

#### **Division of Senior and Disability Services: Adult Protective Service Workers: Social Services Specialists II/III**

These workers are the adult counterpart to the Office of Children's Services child protection workers. Adult Protective Services responds to reports of harm of vulnerable adults to determine whether intervention is needed to assure the safety of the individual in question, arranges for emergency living arrangements if needed for the adult's welfare, and works to provide necessary services for the individual to eliminate the conditions which put the adult at risk of abuse or harm. Adult protective service workers work with vulnerable adults ages 18 and up. There are only 14 adult protective service workers to meet the needs of the entire state. In order to be in position to provide a rapid response when a report of harm is received, the unit must be fully staffed. While we currently have no vacancy, it is important that we be able to immediately respond should a vacancy occur.

#### **Division of Public Health- Public Health Nurses**

Public Health Nurses are first responders in a health crisis. They provide the front line work force in the investigation and treatment of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted disease (STD). They work directly with individuals throughout the state to provide health care, and report potentially dangerous health conditions that must be monitored and/or pursued to minimize other Alaskans exposure. They are a critical component of the public health of Alaskan citizens. In many parts of the state, they are the only health care provider available to individuals. Many of the public health care clinics are minimally staffed and the loss of a single public health nurse could force the closure of the clinic. Active recruiting and hiring of public health nurses is a continuous process, just to keep within a manageable vacancy rate. We must attempt to maintain the staffing levels in the



public health nursing section to adequately respond to the needs of the citizenry and keep Alaskans safe and healthy.

#### **Division of Public Assistance Field Service Eligibility Technicians**

Eligibility technicians provide the gate through which Alaskans walk to receive benefits for the social service programs that the Department of Health and Social Services administers. They are the first point of contact for many individuals seeking financial assistance for services such as energy assistance, senior benefits, Medicaid and Denali KidCare, adult public assistance, temporary assistance for needy families, food stamps, and emergency medical and employment services. Eligibility Technicians are located in 17 offices throughout the state and in most areas work in conjunction with Dept. of Labor employment security specialists in Job Centers.

The Division is in the midst of the normal seasonal increase in application volumes. The seasonal spike in applications appears to be exacerbated by the national recession as Division offices are beginning to see an unanticipated increase in people coming to public assistance offices and, in some offices, a rise in application volumes for key safety-net programs. Inadequate staffing causes delays in conducting interviews and in processing the paperwork necessary to qualify needy individuals and families for financial assistance, leaving them vulnerable to harm. In addition, it is essential to maintain adequate staffing levels to ensure the division is able to meet federally mandated performance standards for timely and accurate eligibility decisions in order to avoid fiscal sanctions and penalties.

Recent events in Emmonak and the dramatic (nearly 35%) increase in heating assistance applications have clearly demonstrated the value and need for eligibility technicians to connect residents with services. Eligibility Technicians are not highly compensated and turnover is high. A new worker must be adequately trained to be effective in managing the workload. It is important that the division be allowed to continuously recruit as these positions become vacant to assure the services continue uninterrupted to the citizens of the state and that no one is at risk due to lack of food, shelter, and necessary financial assistance to meet medical and other basic needs.

#### **Division of Health Care Services- Certification and Licensing Health Facility Surveyors**

Recent events with the Mary Conrad Center in Anchorage have clearly demonstrated the value of the health facility surveyors in protecting the well-being of our most vulnerable Alaskans requiring medical care. Unless we are fully staffed we will not be able to meet Federal mandates. Not doing so will jeopardize federal dollars coming in the State as well as the risk of an inability to allow opening of new facilities or investigate serious allegations of injury, abuse and neglect. The health facility surveyor pool is very small and the work requires specialized training. Turnover has been a problem in assuring adequate staff to meet the needs of the state. Recently work has been done to improve the ability of the state to recruit and retain health facility surveyors and we are seeing positive results in terms of recent hiring pools. However, recruitments for two positions were underway at the time the hiring freeze was announced and a waiver is necessary to allow appointment from the candidate pool. There are only 6 surveyors, a trainer/supervisor and a manager authorized for the entire state, one



Karen Rehfeld  
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surveyor; the trainer/supervisor and manager are currently vacant. It is important that we be allowed to continue to recruit to address the vacancies in this unit critical to the protection of vulnerable Alaskans.

Your favorable consideration is requested. If you have any additional questions, please contact Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner, at 465-1630.

  
Approved  
OMB APPROVED  
 2/6/2009

Disapproved

Mike Nizich, Chief of Staff

2-6-09  
Date

State of Alaska  
Sarah Palin, Governor

Office of Management and Budget

PO Box 110020  
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(907) 465-4660, fax 465-3640

To: Commissioners  
Administrative Services Directors

Date: February 6, 2009

From:  Karen J. Rehfeld  
Director

Subject: Hiring Freeze  
Update

In response to questions that have been asked about hiring freeze applicability, I want to clarify that the following positions are also exempt from the hiring freeze:

- Recall seasonal positions.
- Student, college, and graduate interns.
- New hires into seasonal positions for the Department of Fish and Game, Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
- On-call and temporary substitute positions.
- EVOS Trustee Council.