

Administrative Services- 2009 Departmental Accomplishments

Administrative Services consists of three sub-departments: Office of Personnel, Purchasing Department and EEOC.

Office of Personnel

The Department of Administrative Services, Office of Personnel, strives to continue to provide services to all city employees and retirees. This office administers Civil Service, not only to the City of Albany employees, but also for the Albany City School District, Albany Public Library and the Albany Housing Authority. We continue to participate in State held examinations on Saturdays as well as continuous examinations, on a daily basis, for entry-level positions and IT Testing.

As the City continues to face the financial challenges engulfed in the economic climate affecting every facet of the nation, cost-saving measures have continually been adopted by the department to address the ever-growing cost of benefits associated with employment. In 2008, the City adopted Medicare Advantage Programs for Medicare-eligible retirees. These plans are designed to reduce costs associated with duplicate covered services and prescriptions provided through Medicare and City health insurance programs. An additional benefit of Medicare Advantage Programs is that they promote wellness, and therefore have discounts to health clubs/gyms, and benefits for dental and vision coverage, which the previous retiree benefits did not. In 2009, the Department released a new Canadian mail order prescription program available to participating employees and retirees of the City of Albany. In addition, the NYRx cooperative, which handles the prescription benefits for City of Albany employees and retirees, contracted with Envision Rx options for prescription benefits. In conjunction with the proposed savings, the new prescription vendor provides greater reporting opportunities and transparency with regards to the actual drug costs, rebates and pass-along fees, which will ensure financial accountability.

In 2007, Administrative Services redesigned the website to include an application for employment, all job postings/vacancies and all Civil Service Examination Announcements. The response from the community has been overwhelming. As the unemployment rate continues to skyrocket, the accessibility to employment opportunities becomes even more of a challenge. The Department has seen a steady increase in employment applications for all positions, which had a positive effect in hiring qualified individuals for employment. In an effort to be more accessible and transparent, the City's website has been developed to include on-line parking ticket payment services, Block By Block initiative reports and information, Federal Stimulus Funding projects, guidelines, and financial information, the Go-Green and Recycling initiatives, Sex Offender Awareness, and Common Council Minutes for years 2008 & 2009. In addition, the Department is preparing to continue its efforts by enhancing the website with new and developing information as it becomes available. After its initial launch in 2007, the website has continuously become a tool for citizens, visitors, and others to view the many facets of City Government. In 2009, the average monthly visit to the City's website reached 50,000 hits.

PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

As the national, state and local economies continue to experience stress, the City of Albany must make every effort to operate efficiently and effectively, making the best use of our limited resources. In this connection, the Purchasing Department has implemented new procedures to enhance its' own level of efficiency, and is encouraging similar efficiencies in the various City departments and agencies.

Working closely with the City departments, the Purchasing Department is assisting in soliciting bids and quotes from a variety of vendors in order to secure the best price for those commodities routinely used within the various departments. Additionally, the department is purchasing items in bulk when applicable, resulting in cost savings and the items being secured in a timely manner.

The Purchasing Department is working with Corporation Counsel to update and revise the City's purchasing manual to reflect today's economic and legal realities. A revision will ensure that we get the best price for all goods necessary for the conduct of government business. In the upcoming year, we are moving forward with an effort to purchase "green" products wherever possible in conformance with State and local guidelines. In an expansion of our effort to "buy in bulk," we are working cooperatively with other area municipalities to assemble lists of items commonly used by the cities and towns. By combining orders for commonly used items, we hope to generate cost savings. The City purchases hundreds of thousands of dollars in supplies, services and equipment each year, most of which are stored in the various City agencies. Although some City agencies do have inventory control programs, the Purchasing Department intends to explore the feasibility of a citywide inventory control program to ensure the security of these costly items. This project may have additional benefits by allowing inter-agency transfers of various products. During these tough economic times it is essential that we get the most for our money and purchase items at the lowest possible price. We will work with department heads to ensure that we have the necessary supplies, services and equipment to keep the City operating. We will do so in the most efficient and effective manner. The taxpayers deserve no less.

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Fair Housing

In 2009, our Office helped the city increase targeted outreach and recruitment, strengthen Minority and Women Business compliance monitoring efforts, provided support and assistance to the City of Albany Commission on Human Rights, and planned and implemented the City of Albany's largest Juneteenth Celebration (the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States). By engaging in these activities, our office helps to decrease incidents of alleged discrimination and create meaningful employment and housing connections for residents of the city. This Office assists in ensuring equal opportunity employment, increasing diversity and cultural awareness, and promoting Human Rights, which are all very important factors in ensuring the continued growth and longevity of our city, especially because of its multifaceted cultural base and ever increasingly diverse population. The Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (herein after E.E.O.) and Fair Housing assisted the city in

meeting the challenges associated with increasing cultural awareness and the tolerance level of all citizens. The Office of E.E.O and Fair Housing collaborated with the Albany Community Development Agency and Albany Housing Authority to host the Minority and Women Business Enterprise Meet and Greet Social and Stimulus Update. The intent of this event was to educate M/WBE's on the Stimulus and how it could potentially impact their businesses, and increase the number of City-Certified Minority and Women Businesses Enterprises.

The Office partnered with New York State to celebrate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Memorial Observance and Career and Training Fair. This collaboration between the City of Albany and the New York State Office of General Services and New York State Department of Labor attracted a record setting 1300 job and training seekers. During the Career and Training Fair, an E.E.O. and Fair Housing representative answered numerous questions regarding how to obtain employment in the City of Albany, how to navigate the Civil Service System, and also accepted numerous applications for employment. Additionally this Office conducted outreach and recruitment at area colleges and community-based organizations. These efforts resulted in a greater number of citizens having access to City of Albany employment information.

Our office also works with the City of Albany Commission on Human Rights to educate individuals, especially children, on the importance of respecting people who are of different backgrounds and consequently to help create a more harmonious environment within the city. The Commission on Human Rights also recognizes people and organizations that promote human and civil rights within the City of Albany at the City of Albany Annual Awards Reception held in the beginning of February. They also created an MOU for the city to assist the state with outreach and distribution of its promotional materials at city-sponsored Human Rights events. In the upcoming year, the Office of E.E.O. and Fair Housing looks to work closely with other departments within the city to ensure that we are maximizing opportunities to collaborate, and create synergistic working relationships that will help us do more with less and move us forward as a city. We also look to establish and strengthen partnerships with other governmental entities to streamline much-needed outreach and training efforts. The city and its partners know that by working together and meeting the challenges of our time head-on, we will inevitably strengthen our city's ability to stay relevant and thrive in all too uncertain economic times. We also know that increasing cultural awareness and tolerance helps to increase the quality of life for all citizens within our great city of Albany