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Need a job? Check Austin City Hall soon

Departments taking inventory of openings

Austin Business Journal - by [Jacob Dirr](#)

Forget Facebook and other companies spotlighted in headlines for Austin-area job creation. City Hall is where the hiring action is — or at least will be soon.

The city has about **1,000 vacancies**, although exactly how many of those will be filled in the foreseeable future is a bit of a mystery.

Included in that tally are jobs that have interviews in progress or offers pending, city spokesman Kyle Carvell said. The tally also includes future police and fire cadets.

While there are about **90 jobs currently advertised** on the city's website, city officials are indicating they have many more to fill.

The city's human resources department is asking all departments to quantify how many vacancies they have in preparation for a Nov. 6 job fair.

Of those 1,000 vacancies, some city departments may be keeping a bunch of jobs vacant in preparation for departmental reorganizations, and other positions may be dependent on supplemental or grant funding, Austin Human Resources Assistant Director Karen Sharp said.

"This is the type of scrubbing the departments are doing now," Sharp said, adding that information will be released when she has it.

Sharp said it is wrong to assume the city created a lot of jobs after recently passing the new budget about a month ago. She said the city has about 100 jobs posted online at any given time.

She also said the city has about 12,000 employees and a vacancy rate of 8 percent, yielding about 1,000 open positions, which she said is normal for a large organization.

In 2009, the city imposed a formal hiring freeze, with a vetting process for any department to fill positions. While budgets are still tight, "I would say it is easier to fill jobs now," Sharp said.

With unemployment at 7.2 percent, most job seekers don't care if their future paychecks come from the public or the private sector, said Rudy Herrera, director of **Goodwill Staffing Services Inc.**

He said the number of people seeking jobs through his company — mostly temporary clerical positions — have increased by about 120 percent in the past 18 months.

When applying for a city job, competition can be fierce and the process may differ from the private sector.

For example, this past summer 81 people applied for a "chief service officer" job, funded by a grant and aimed at increasing volunteer opportunities in the city. The job was filled, but no interviews were held.

Andy Mormon — a former aide to Mayor Lee Leffingwell, unemployed since December — was selected and given a \$59,000 salary, according to city records.

A city spokeswoman said there was no time for interviews because council approved the position funds on July 29 and the desk had to be filled by Sept. 10 to receive the grant.

Within the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos metro area, government employment has grown by 4 percent over the past 12 months, according to August data.

In August, there were 165,300 reported government employees, compared to 158,900 a year ago, according to **Workforce Solutions**.

But while Austin is flying high on a recruitment kick, the second-largest city in the metro area — Round Rock — has strikingly fewer jobs posted: just six, as of press time.

For about the last year, Round Rock was not filling any positions, said city spokesman Will Hampton.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin