

# Agenda: MNIT Meet & Confer

Date: 1/31/24

## Introductions & Housekeeping

### Attendees:

**MNIT Management:** Rachel Dopson, Jon Eichten, Shawna Hennek, Ray Phipps, Chad Thuet, Shanna Vah

**MAPE:** Jed Becher, Lyz Losie, Barbara Monaco, Andi Morris, Carolyn Murphy, Patrick Pueringer, Axelina Swenson

## Agenda Items

### Pay History Law

* New law implemented January 1st that prohibits employers from asking about or considering an applicant’s past or current pay in hiring – how is MNIT going to implement this?

Management response:

* Have sent an email to all managers and supervisors advising them not to ask about pay history anytime in the hiring process
* MNIT is acting based on MMB memo providing guidance to agencies
* Chad presented to Executive Steering Team proposing changes to the compensation setting process. HR taking over the salary setting process instead of having a back and forth with the hiring manager/supervisor. This is also helpful as HR can emphasize the other aspects of the benefits package.
  + Proposed changes:
    - HR will complete the salary recommendations form
    - HR will negotiate and establish salaries directly with candidates/finalists
    - HR responds independently to compensation complaints/appeals
    - HR will make the final decision on all compensation offers after carefully collecting & considering all information impacting the final decision
* Commissioner makes the final decision on how to move forward based on Executive Steering Team feedback
* Understand that contract requires a step increase upon promotion and will abide by that
* Will compare to existing employees and their qualifications – aim to eliminate disparities in salary setting
* Will consider the number of qualified candidates, number of times job has been posted, and other things in the salary setting process
* Historically, a promotion has been 3 steps – now it could be 1, or even 5 steps
* Will not impact reallocations as those are not candidates under the law

### Student Loan Reimbursement

* Important for both recruitment and retention, particularly for those early in their state employment
* Per the HR newsletter, there are 80 more open positions now than at this time last year

Management response:

* Program was stopped while awaiting Executive Order on Public Student Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)
* Contract had much higher salary increases than typical
* Many MNIT staff are paid through rates and MNIT can’t account for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) when estimating rates
* Policy was put on hold to figure out the impacts of COLAs
* Need to see how the biennium plays out and whether COLAs will be able to be handled without significant rate increases

### Safe & Sick Time Law

* Our understanding is that employees can now use sick time in the event of the closure of an office, or if a child’s school or daycare is closed (which previously required use of vacation time) – we would like MNIT to communicate this to staff

Management response:

* Posted on the Intranet under 2023 Agency Updates
* Clarified that this only applies if school or daycare is closed due to weather or other public emergency, not closures for other reasons
* Sick Leave Policy has the updated language (located in the Policies library)
* A Gov Delivery message was sent out in January in the winter HR newsletter
* Management will look at including this in the next HR newsletter

### Vacation Length of Service Credit

* Email back in September advised of new procedure, but do not see this information on the Intranet ([policy online](https://intranet.mnit.mn.gov/assets/procedure-length-service-credit-vacation-accrual_tcm1102-357200.pdf) is from 2018)
* Some supervisors seem to be unaware of the change in the process
* Policy update needed providing details

Management response:

* Did recognize the lack of update in the policy and are working on updating the policy – will have it updated by next meeting
* Language between unions is not consistent so it can be more challenging to put in a policy
* Over 200 requests have been processed

### Visa Sponsorship

* We’re aware that as a general rule, MNIT will not sponsor employees (or potential employees) – why is that?
* Would like HR to ensure that all employees are fully aware of what different Visa statuses mean so we are not hiring people who ultimately can’t stay because MNIT won’t sponsor them
  + MAPE will provide a specific example at the meeting (we are working to get details)

Management response:

* Sponsorship has significant costs, particularly the H1B which has a $10,000 cost
  + Additionally, if employee is released via layoff or termination, MNIT takes on the risk of needing to pay for the employee and their family to their home country
* The state has made a decision not to use eVerify, but that was under a different administration – Deputy Commissioner Eichten is exploring the possibility of utilizing the system for the sole reason of verifying someone’s employment

### DCYF Impacts to MNIT Staff

* It’s our understanding that some MNIT staff currently supporting various agencies will be moving to support DCYF
  + Have the staff been identified yet?
  + How will these staff be informed?

Management response:

* Recent meeting open to all MNIT staff partnering with DHS
* These employees and the timeline have yet to be identified – there are decisions with the Federal government that still need to be made
* Staff supporting Prism will likely be impacted by a shift to report up through the CBTO supporting DCYF, but other affected staff are yet to be identified
* Working to identify legal ownership of systems (SSIS, MAXIS) for purposes of audits, etc
* Ultimately a reporting change
* Will provide at least 60 days notice
* FY25 will likely be mostly a transition year with more changes at the beginning of FY26 when funding begins
* Trying to hire a CBTO to be in place by start of FY25 – they will work hand in hand with the CBTO supporting DHS

### Phishing Simulation Emails

* A few months ago, a fake phishing email went out saying the union negotiated a change in holidays – got people upset with MAPE, including requests to drop membership
* Last week, a fake phishing email went out about AI and required training – timing was bad given upcoming training on AI
* Ask to not use union language in phishing simulations and to be cognizant of timing of them as well

Management response:

* Keenly aware of the concerns
* HR Governance Committee including CBTOs and HR professionals across the state discusses the emails before approving them
* Need to have tricky emails that look and feel real without alienating people/groups in some way – HR is working on refining this