

2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Financial Services – Budget Office

REQUEST NO.: 25

REQUESTED BY: Alter

DATE REQUESTED: 5/1/17

DATE POSTED: 5/4/17

REQUEST: What is the citywide process for handling vacancies? Please provide data on how long vacancies stay open citywide and the factors that could impact the length of a vacancy staying open.

RESPONSE:

The City of Austin anticipates vacancies in the budget based on historical trends and experience. Vacancies are to be expected as a natural result of the hiring process within an organization. Most vacancies are filled within a three to six month period. However, there are positions that remain vacant for longer periods due to extenuating circumstances.

There are many factors that affect the amount of time a position remains vacant. All positions take time to recruit, interview, and hire a candidate, and this process can vary based on the nature of the position, how competitive the pay is, or if the position needs to be reclassified prior to recruitment. This recruitment process can also be lengthened at the beginning of the fiscal year, depending on how many new positions were added during the budget process. External factors, such as the state of the economy, may also affect the time a position remains vacant. Finally, if a position is filled internally, the vacancy moves to another position.

The amount of positions vacant for a year or more is minimal considering the size of the City of Austin. Positions vacant greater than twelve months are unusual, but do occasionally occur because of position reclassifications, a candidate's failure to pass a criminal background check, rejections of job offers, the nature of the position making it hard to fill, or the position not being budgeted for the entire fiscal year.

Beginning on the next page is a list of responses to Council budget questions over the previous four fiscal years related to vacancies. Follow the link to access the question and response for supplemental information on vacancies which ranges from department specific to citywide. The Council Budget Question web site can be accessed here:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm>. Following is the Proposed Budget Vacancy Report memo from August 2, 2016 which provides additional information on vacancies and along with a comparison to other major Texas cities.

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Council Budget Question Responses:

FY 2014

http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=275CC4D9
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=275CC4DB
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=275CC4D8
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2657CEDB
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2656CFD3
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2656C4D9

FY 2015

http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2652CADE
http://www.austintexas.gov/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2951CAD9

FY 2016

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2855CADE
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2853CFDC
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2851CFDC
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2850C5D9
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2850CAD9

FY 2017

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=285DCCDE
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2055CFD2C5
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2055C8D8C9
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2055C9D8C9
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054CDD8CF
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054CDD8C8
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054CED8CF
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/budget/cbq/index.cfm?action=pushFile&popup=true&FILE_ID=2054CEDCC4



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Ed Van Eenoo, Deputy Chief Financial Officer *EW*

DATE: August 2, 2016

SUBJECT: Proposed Budget Vacancy Report

At the June 11, 2015 City Council meeting, Mayor and Council approved Resolution 20150611-012, directing the City Manager to provide a report with each Proposed Annual Budget that includes each vacant non-sworn position, how long it has been vacant for, how much funding has been allocated, and an explanation for continuing funding.

The attached report details all non-sworn vacant positions within the City as of August 1, 2016. Highlights include the date the position became vacant, the recruitment phase of the position, its expected payroll start date, and explanations for positions that have been vacant for 12 months or more.

Vacancies are to be expected as a natural result of the hiring process within an organization. The City of Austin's current civilian vacancy rate of 6.7% and overall vacancy rate of 7.7% compare very favorably with other large Texas cities. These calculations account for positions where job offers have been accepted but for which the individuals have not yet been added to the payroll system. This provides for the most up-to-date vacancy information possible.

| City | Date | Civilian Vacancy Rate | Total Vacancy Rate |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Austin* | 8/1/2016 | 6.7% | 7.7% |
| Dallas* | 7/26/2016 | 12.1% | N/A |
| Fort Worth* | 7/8/2016 | 9.8% | 8.1% |
| Houston** | 7/26/2016 | 11.6% | 11.0% |
| San Antonio* | 6/30/2016 | 8.2% | N/A |

* Fiscal year ends September 30

** Fiscal year ends June 30

Austin's below average vacancy rate is attributable to three years of initiatives to review and reduce vacant positions. Fiscal Year 2013-14 began with an 11.5% civilian rate, and although the beginning of the fiscal year will always see a high rate because of the addition of newly approved positions, Fiscal Year 2014-15 started with a significantly lower civilian rate of 7.8%. Fiscal Year 2015-16 began with a civilian rate of 10.1% because of the addition of 293 new non-sworn positions, and as this current fiscal year has progressed, newly approved positions have been filled, causing the civilian vacancy rate to fall to its current level of 6.7%. However, 77.3 are of these newly approved positions are vacant, and 68% of these vacancies are related to the timing of Library and Aviation facility openings.

Most vacancies are filled within a three to six month period. However, there are positions that remain vacant for longer periods due to extenuating circumstances. There are many factors that affect the amount of time a position remains vacant. All positions take time to recruit, interview, and hire a candidate, and this process can vary based on the nature of the position, how competitive the pay is, or if the position needs to be reclassified prior to recruitment. This recruitment process can also be lengthened at the beginning of the fiscal year, depending on how many new positions were added during the budget process. External factors, such as the state of the economy, may also affect the time a position remains vacant. Finally, if a position is filled internally, the vacancy moves to another position. The amount of positions vacant for a year or more is minimal considering the size of the City of Austin.

Of the 623.5 vacant non-sworn positions, 446 have been vacant for less than six months (72%), 169.5 have been vacant for six to twelve months (27%), and only eight have been vacant for more than a year (1%). Positions vacant greater than twelve months are unusual, but do occasionally occur because of position reclassifications, a candidate's failure to pass a criminal background check, rejections of job offers, the nature of the position making it hard to fill, or the position not being budgeted for the entire fiscal year.

As always, if you have any questions regarding the Vacancy Report, I am available to assist.

xc: City Manager
Assistant City Managers
Chief of Staff
Chief Financial Officer
Deputy Chief Financial Officer