

HireReach Case Studies Series



CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

How a city with about 1,500 employees and 300 annual hires improved its hiring by replacing the traditional civil service exam with a skills-based hiring process.



This is an innovation that can transform your hiring process. It was incredibly valuable to have a team of experts help us update a hiring process to be consistent, equitable, and legally defensible.

— City of Grand Rapids



For its development of a skills-based hiring process, the city was awarded the 2021 Impact Award by the region's Workforce Investment Board, West Michigan Works!

Discover why 98.2% of HireReach graduates report that the program prepared them to design a skills-based hiring process at their organization:



CONTACT
Marlene@HireReach.org
616.368.9537

Scan this code to learn more. (<https://www.hirereach.org/contact-us>)

The Employer

Grand Rapids is the second-largest city in Michigan, with a population of nearly 200,000 served by municipal employees across 35 departments.

The Challenge: Replacing a Complex, Labor-Intensive Civil Service Hiring System

Like many government organizations, the City of Grand Rapids was encumbered with a manual civil service process, including jargon-filled paper exams that added barriers to employment. It needed a fair, legally defensible, efficient, and easily accessible process.

The Solution

After enrolling in the 2019 cohort of HireReach, the city implemented a skills-based hiring process in July 2019, starting with administrative support and maintenance hiring. This included replacing the in-person civil service exam with a streamlined 30-minute assessment that applicants can complete remotely, at their convenience. This modern, science-based process has since been expanded to cover all positions in the largest bargaining group, with approximately 520 employees.

The Results

- Increased diversity of candidates
- More convenience and ease of use for applicants and administrators alike
- Fair and equitable tools that support a legally defensible process
- Better job fit resulting in better retention



West Michigan Works!, the region's Workforce Investment Board, was a founding partner of HireReach and served as its initial parent agency. HireReach now operates under the auspices of Strategic Workforce Solutions, a 501(c)3 created by West Michigan Works! to advance workforce innovation. JOFI®, a registered trademark of Metrics Reporting Inc., is the technological partner of HireReach, providing expertise in industrial psychology, assessments, compensatory scoring and legal defensibility.