

Human Resources Department

Mission

To provide professional, respectful, caring and ethical Human Resource services and solutions with supporting policies and procedures to enhance the fair recruitment, retention, training and development of our most valuable resource – the employees of the City, and to provide them with a safe, inclusive and positive workplace with fair compensation.

The Human Resources Department provides a wide range of services to the City of Newton's employees and management team, including but not limited to:

- Leadership, Departmental Support and Counseling
- Talent Acquisition and Professional Development
- Development of Policies and Procedures
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs and Initiatives
- Wellness Initiatives
- Administration of Employee Benefits
- Workers' Safety, Workers' Compensation, and Injured on Duty Administration
- Compensation and Classification Plan Management
- Labor and Employee Relations
- Labor and Employment Law Compliance
- Management of Grievances and Discipline
- Personnel Record Keeping
- Risk Management and Compliance
- Succession Planning and Business Continuity

Fiscal Year 2022 was a challenging yet very productive year for the Department of Human Resources.

We continued our work in further developing and organizing the way in which we provide municipal human resources services. Our organization structure reflects our priorities:

(1) Our *Citywide/Executive Leadership Division* which focuses on citywide initiatives (e.g., collective bargaining, personnel policies and procedures, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, employee wellness and relations, and talent development) is led by the Director of Human Resources.

(2) Our *Departmental Support Division* which provides direct departmental support includes HR Business Partners who are assigned to specific departments and act as professional HR “liaisons.” This allows departmental leadership and staff the ability to go to a single HR staff member with all personnel matters.

(3) The *Specialty Division* focuses on specialized areas of human resources that require a specific level of expertise and experience (e.g., employee injury management (workers’ compensation and injured on duty for police and fire), safety management (including all human resources work relating to the COVID-19 pandemic), employee benefits, Family and Medical Leave Act and employee leave administration, and Americans with Disabilities Act administration, including requests for reasonable accommodations).

The Human Resources Department continued to invest heavily in **supporting the needs, during the pandemic**, of our city department leadership, individual employees, and union representatives.

HR continued to review and develop **COVID-19 protocols, policies and procedures** including the development and implementation of a new

employee COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. This policy imposes a new term and condition of employment for all municipal employees which requires that they be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus or be on an approved exemption for medical or religious reasons. This policy was first rolled out to our nonunion staff and school nurses in September of 2021 and then later to the remainder of our workforce in November of 2021. The deadline for compliance was January 14, 2022. During the compliance period, the Human Resources Department partnered with the HHS team to provide guidance, support, and resources to our employees regarding the policy and the available COVID-19 vaccines. Also, during the compliance period, the City’s bargaining team met with all nine of our unions to discuss the impact of the policy. Hearing the voices of our valued union leadership was important and through this process we entered into agreements with eight of our unions. The policy was an important step towards fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing workplace safety. The Human Resources team was very proud to report that by the close of the business day on the compliance deadline we had engaged 100% of our workforce and had full participation.

HR continued to conduct close contact tracing in the workplace; address requests from high-risk employees for reasonable accommodations; assist employees in obtaining access to testing and understanding quarantine and isolation protocols; support departments with understanding employee medical confidentiality requirements; and support employees in need of leave due to qualifying COVID-19 related reasons.

In May of 2021, we rolled out information, forms and training relating to the Massachusetts Emergency Paid Leave Program and continued to develop resources for our

staff via in-person interaction or by expanding on our dedicated employee COVID-19 Information website.

The HR benefits team also **educated and made benefit resources available** to employees, including COVID-19 cost-sharing and cost-reductions, changes to prescription refills, and the use of telemedicine options. (Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, telemedicine utilization by City employees on City health insurance plans was less than 1%. Tufts Health Plan reported that FY2021 utilization of telemedicine options by our employees increased to 45%, and in FY2022 our employees utilized telehealth options 43% more often than our peers.)

At the start of the pandemic, the HR benefits team worked quickly to **improve access** to our plan providers and plan materials, making them easily accessible to employees online or via video meetings, and worked hard to educate employees on the impacts of the pandemic on their health and wellbeing. We learned from this experience that our employee's utilization of our benefit services increased. So, as we moved into FY2022, we continued to allow a hybrid model for engaging our benefits team – making access either in person or remotely and worked to make materials and resources available both in person and on online platforms. This new hybrid model allows us to adapt to the individual employee needs. The HR benefits team also continued its work to expand on our options relating to *Flexible Spending Accounts*, while allowing employees additional opportunities to use FSA funds and regular access to guidance and tips on how best to capitalize on this valuable benefit.

Having now held two highly successful virtual annual Open Enrollment periods for Health and Dental Insurance, we plan to continue to offer this as an option but do anticipate the ability to safely begin in the spring of 2022 a hybrid of an

in person and remote health fairs for our employees.

As we come out of a very challenging surge of COVID-19 caused by the Omicron variant, we are taking this opportunity of hope and recovery to envision the future of our workforce and culture. Our goal is to adapt to the needs of our employees and of candidates for employment. To that end, we revisited our remote work practices with the goal of developing a policy that will allow, where appropriate, employees the ability to work a hybrid remote schedule. Having a remote work option is an attractive benefit to current employees and future candidates for both personal and professional reasons and allows the city to ensure continuous operations and to grow and adapt to the needs of our dedicated staff. That said, not all employees can perform their duties in a remote way. We have focused on how to serve all forms of work in a collaborative and supportive way.

Employee safety improved at the start of the pandemic. Workplace injuries decreased by 27% in FY2021. In FY2022, we did not see a further decrease in injuries, but, we have also not seen a return to the level of workplace injuries we were experiencing prior to the pandemic. We attribute this to additional safety training, modified work schedules, greater access to safety resources, and the continuation of hybrid remote work options.

Prior to the pandemic, the Human Resources Director was working closely with the Mayor's Office to enhance and increase our efforts to diversify our workforce; develop **diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives** and training; and review our operations to create a culture of inclusion where all employees can thrive, and all our customers are receiving equitable and respectful service. The HR Department continued this work in FY2022 by bringing several rounds of diversity and inclusive

leadership training to our staff. We also coordinated harassment, discrimination and “respect in the workplace” training to several departments and plan to roll this out to more and more departments this year and beyond. We also supported the City Council in conducting its first ever DEI training and look forward to working closely with the Mayor’s Office, City Clerk and the City Council on bringing additional training to our elected and appointed officials. The HR team also coordinated eight sessions of management training for all city department leadership and supervisors and look forward to expanding our training menu to more employees in FY2023.

The HR Department continued to work with the Mayor’s Office to develop a request for proposal for an outside consultant to support the City in its wide ranging DEI goals. This will include (1) recruiting, hiring, training, promoting, and retaining a more diverse and inclusive workforce and (2) improving systems, policies, programs, and processes within the City of Newton to identify systemic impediments to issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion as they relate to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and geography.

HR supported the **acquisition of talent** in FY2022. To date, the HR team supported the hiring of eighty full time, part time, and seasonal employees. Thirty-six of these were full time positions, including four school nurses, three positions with our Community Planning and Development team, two Emergency Telecommunications Dispatchers and six Police Officers in the Newton Police Department, and fifteen positions in the Department of Public Works.

The HR Director and Senior Generalist also supported the City Council in the appointment of a new City Clerk and the promotion of our

Deputy Comptroller to the position of Comptroller in FY2022.

In FY2022, the Human Resources Director continued work on **positive and collaborative relationships with all the City’s unions** and the City’s management bargaining process. Having finalized successor contracts with the Fire Fighters Union and the Nurses Union in the previous year, we added additional finalized contracts with two AFSCME unions covering our DPW Engineers, City Hall staff, Custodians, Librarians and Dispatchers, and with the Newton Police Association. We are continuing to work closely with our unions to discuss successor contracts with the remaining unions.

The Human Resources Department continued to expand and improve our pre-employment **background checks** in partnership with Creative Services, Inc. (CSI) by working to continue to develop candidate profiles based on the individuals needs of specific positions.

In addition to background checks, the HR Department also **improved the assessment of what skills are needed** for positions. This helps the City ensure that the candidates we select hold the skills needed for the job; it assists the City in accessing the skills of candidates so we can target employee onboarding and training where needed; and most importantly, it expands on our DEI initiatives by allowing the City to contemplate nontraditional candidates who might not meet traditional minimum entrance requirements, but actually hold the skills needed to do the job or the ability to obtain them.

Employee wellness and access to employee assistance was a continued focus in FY2022 for the Human Resources Department. The HR staff regularly made resources available through its *Employee Assistance Program* (EAP), provided by CMG Associates of Newton, including a new, free benefit with the launch of the “Aware

Mindfulness Channel” and “COVID-19 News For You.” Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Tufts Health Plan also provided our employee members increased access to wellness opportunities.

The HR team is excited and energized for the future as we begin to reimagine and refocus our work once again towards core human resources best practices including a stronger focus in the new fiscal year on the development and updating of our policies, procedures, contracts, and departmental operations. We are looking forward to “getting back to basics” in the year ahead to further improve our operations and services, reimagine our future, and make a positive impact on our valued workforce in the years to come.

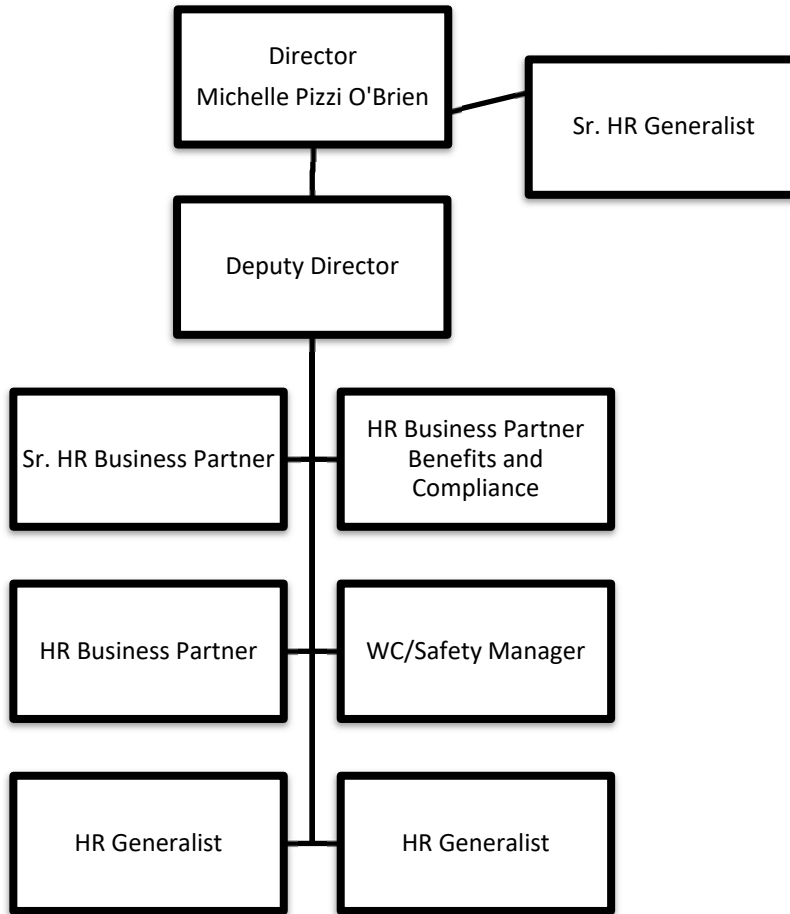
My goal continues to work towards an HR Department which provides an exemplary level of service to our employees and management team with a **supportive, professional, and strategic Human Resources Department.**

I am very proud to have recently celebrated my third-year anniversary as the Human Resources Director for the City of Newton and I look forward to working with and for our employees in the years ahead.



Michelle Pizzi O'Brien, M.P.A.
Director of Human Resources

Human Resources



Financial and Operating Highlights

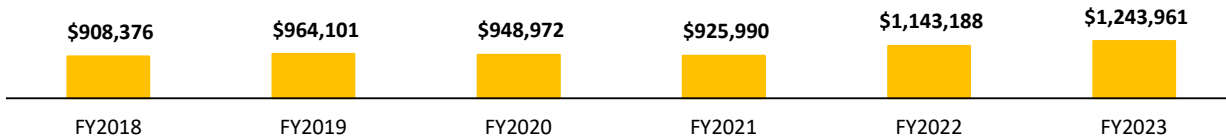
Financial Highlights

	< -----Actual ----->				Original	Proposed
	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
Expenditure by Department						
HR	\$ 908,376	\$ 964,101	\$ 948,972	\$ 925,990	\$ 1,143,188	\$ 1,243,961
Total	\$ 908,376	\$ 964,101	\$ 948,972	\$ 925,990	\$ 1,143,188	\$ 1,243,961
% Incr		6.13%	-1.57%	-2.42%	23.46%	8.82%

Personnel

Full-Time	9	8	7	7	8	9
Part-Time	1	1	1	0	0	0
Total	10	9	8	7	8	9

Total HR Expenditures



Operating Highlights

Talent Acquisition Highlights

As of Feb 2022, HR supported the hiring and recruitment activities Citywide of over 80 positions, 27 Seasonal, 17 part time and 36 full time including the City Clerk and Comptroller.

Health and Wellness Highlights

Supported employees in maintaining access to needed health and wellness programs, educated employees on the use of telemedicine options increasing utilization from 1% in FY20 to 45% in FY21. In FY22 our employee telehealth encounters were 43% higher than our peers. Thus reducing the impact on the City's health insurance costs.

Talent Development

Conducted over 94 hours of employee training in the subject areas of management best practices, diversity, unconscious bias and inclusive leadership and discrimination, harassment and respect in the workplace, reaching more than 300 employees in this training endeavor. And supported the enrollment of two employees (HHS and IT) into the MMA-Suffolk Certificate in Local Government Leadership and Management.

Workers' Compensation/Injury Management

Maintained a reduced workplace injury rate with a return to operations from COVID-19 of 27%.

Human Resources Department

Fiscal Year 2023 Outcomes and Strategies

In the past three years the Department has made many changes to improve and professionalize the hiring (talent acquisition) process. This includes updating and reviewing position descriptions and compensation when a position becomes vacant, updating the City's hiring website through its new applicant

tracking system Keldair, updating the City's employment application, ensuring professional and organized interviews where our candidates feel comfortable and can share their professional experience and interest in working for the City, developing written guidance to hiring managers on best practices, capitalizing on the option to conduct virtual interviews thereby allowing the City to consider more candidates than might have been possible with in-person preliminary interviews, and accessing a wide range of professional associations and diversity boards to make vacancies more available and reach the talent where they are. Our FY2023 work on talent acquisition and employee development will be done in collaboration with, and guided by, our DEI goals.

In addition to continuing our improvement of the talent acquisition process, we also will invest in employee development through training initiatives. In FY2020, the Human Resources Department focused heavily on COVID-19 and safety related trainings and was able to offer training opportunities to employees through the Massachusetts Municipal Association and Suffolk University. In FY2021, we continued this work and were also able to add additional training in diversity, equity and inclusion (*Unconscious Bias and Inclusive Leadership*), management and supervisory best practices through an MCAD certified trainer, and discrimination, harassment and "respect in the workplace" training. While a successful year for training initiatives, we hope to add additional human resource related trainings on City policies, best practices, customer service and in building a collaborative, inclusive and professional culture.

Outcome 1

Acquire Talent and Develop Employees

Outcome 2

Focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is an important driver of creativity and innovation that can offer both direct benefits to employees and also to the overall health of the City. The Human Resources Department is committed to taking meaningful steps towards embracing and cultivating a diverse workforce where all of our employees are valued, and also have access to

professional opportunities and support and be part of a workforce where all employees can thrive. In FY2023, our goal is to make meaningful progress, including both long-term and short-term goals designed to make permanent change. The Human Resources Department will continue to partner with the Mayor's Office to support and acknowledge all our employees, while working to build an inclusive and diverse environment where our employees will feel engaged, optimistic, and included. The addition of the HR Deputy Director position (made possible in FY2022) will allow the Director to increase focus in this area.

Human Resources Department

Fiscal Year 2023 Outcomes and Strategies

The need for professional human resources management as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic is critical. We will continue to support staff, department leadership, union leadership and the Executive team in the management of all personnel administration needs as it relates to the pandemic and the pandemic recovery period. We will continue to make ourselves available for all of the unique employee and administration needs that have arisen from the pandemic and will continue to work closely with the emergency management team on efforts to support the safety of our employees and Newton residents. We will continue to track legislative changes and impacts to maintain compliance, transparency and communication of these changes when needed.

Additionally, the Human Resources Department will continue its recent work to understand and learn from our experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many organizations, the City of Newton pivoted in many ways to continue providing services to our community. We have learned about the benefits of flexible work schedules and telecommuting. While not all departments or positions can operate in this way, alternative, more flexible work options are beneficial. We also learned a lot about communication, safety, and teambuilding. In FY2023, the Human Resources Department will continue to work with the Mayor's Office and departmental leadership to reconsider what our future "workplace" will be.

Outcome 3

Continue post COVID-19 support and the development of our "new workplace"

Outcome 4

Provide Excellent Employee Benefits

access to benefit information easier and more user friendly for our employees. We also will focus on, with the addition of our Deputy Director, educating employees on available employee benefits including a strong focus on benefits relating to employee wellness and wellbeing. In FY2023, the Human Resources Department will also prepare the City to go out to bid for its health, dental and life insurance plans and continue its efforts to provide in-person and virtual access to health benefits and training.

In FY2023, the Human Resources Department will be reviewing the City's employee benefits package to ensure our benefits are consistent with, if not better than, other municipalities. We will make

A critical FY2023 goal for the Human Resources Department will be to continue our work to strengthen the City's relationship with our employees and their representatives. We will aim to address employee issues as soon as they surface, ensure employees have a safe work

Outcome 5

Strengthen the City's Relationship with Our Employees and their Representatives

Human Resources Department

Fiscal Year 2023 Outcomes and Strategies

environment, and vigorously follow fair employment practices. We will be mindful of the federal and state laws that govern the relationships between labor unions and employers. We will work continuously to have a positive labor-management relationship by communicating regularly, bargaining in good faith, and coordinating the development of fully executed labor agreements. By working closely with our labor unions, the Law Department, department managers, and Executive staff, we will use communication tools, training, mechanisms and procedures to reduce the number of grievances, the time period in which grievances are processed, and the number of grievances which end up with arbitration.

Outcome 6

Expand Personnel Policies and Procedures

A critical FY2023 goal for the Human Resources Department will be to continue its work to establish documented personnel policies and procedures. This will include reviewing our existing policies as well as related personnel City Ordinances to develop policy and procedure documents

that address our obligations as an employer, document employee rights, and ensure employment law compliance. This will also include the regular development of internal standard operating procedures to ensure the consistent application of human resources practices.

In FY2023, the Human Resources Department will continue its work to reorganize and staff the department in our effort to improve upon the personnel management systems in the City. The Human Resources Department has in the last few years converted its method of transactional services to an HR Business Partner model that provides professional human resource services through direct departmental support.

Outcome 7

Continue to Professionalize and Staff the Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department services are divided into three divisions – *Citywide/Executive Leadership*, *Departmental Support* and our *Specialty Division*. Our *Citywide/Executive Leadership Division* includes the Director, the Deputy Director and the Senior HR Generalist. This division focuses on citywide initiatives led by the Director of Human Resources and includes activities such as citywide collective bargaining, the development of personnel policies and procedures, employee wellness and wellbeing, employee relations, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and citywide employee training.

Our *Departmental Support Division* is made up of our HR Business Partners and an HR Generalist. This division provides direct departmental support. The two HR Business Partners are assigned several departments based on their experience and knowledge and act as “liaisons” to their assigned departments. Each HR Business Partner supports the needs of over 400 employees. This model allows

Human Resources Department

Fiscal Year 2023 Outcomes and Strategies

departmental leadership and staff to go to one single HR member with whatever personnel matter they may have. The HR Business Partners, with support from the HR Generalist, either personally addresses and coordinates the personnel need, or triages the matter to other HR staff members or city personnel who can assist. The HR Business Partner becomes deeply involved and knowledgeable in the personnel operations of their assigned departments, allowing them to get to know the staff, the departments mission, and services, and understand their needs as it relates to personnel administration.

The *Specialty Division* of the Human Resources Department will be supported by our Deputy Director and includes the Worker's Compensation and Safety Manager, and an HR Generalist. This division focuses on specialized areas of human resources that require a particular level of expertise and experience. This division handles matters such as employee injury management (worker's compensation and injured on duty for Police and Fire), safety management and initiatives, employee benefits administration and development, Family and Medical Leave Act and employee leave administration, and Americans with Disabilities Act administration, including requests for reasonable accommodations.

In the last year, the Human Resources Department needed to continue services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The HR Business Partner model of support proved effective during the pandemic, and we will continue in FY2023 to educate departmental leadership and staff about the services provided by the Human Resources Department and the 24/7 access they have to human resources professionals.

FUND: 0001 - GENERAL FUND
DEPARTMENT: 109 - HUMAN RESOURCES

CITY OF NEWTON BUDGET
DEPARTMENTAL DETAIL

	ACTUAL 2019	ACTUAL 2020	ACTUAL 2021	ORIGINAL 2022	RECOMMENDED 2023	CHANGE 2022 to 2023
109 - HUMAN RESOURCES						
0110952 - HUMAN RESOURCES						
PERSONNEL SERVICES						
511001 FULL TIME SALARIES	494,401	483,576	475,666	686,955	790,676	103,721
511101 PART TIME < 20 HRS/WK	39,612	29,157	20,012	0	0	0
511102 PART TIME > 20 HRS/WK	39,470	0	0	25,000	0	-25,000
514001 LONGEVITY	2,025	2,250	1,500	1,500	1,500	0
515006 VACATION BUY BACK	14,170	0	3,555	0	0	0
TOTAL PERSONNEL SERVICES	589,678	514,983	500,733	713,455	792,176	78,721
EXPENSES						
524010 OFFICE EQUIPMENT R-M	464	643	371	500	500	0
524080 DEPARTMENTAL EQUIP R-	1,195	745	23	1,400	1,000	-400
527400 RENTAL - EQUIPMENT	3,452	4,010	5,913	5,000	6,000	1,000
530100 CONSULTANTS	31,608	44,090	78,053	25,000	25,000	0
530218 FLEX SPENDING PLAN AD	35,045	36,130	36,255	37,000	40,000	3,000
530220 INVESTIGATION SERVICES	5,170	40,000	31,716	10,000	10,000	0
530221 FIT FOR DUTY SERVICES	13,321	4,147	8,482	10,000	10,000	0
530900 LEGAL SERVICES	18,259	0	0	0	0	0
531300 TEMP STAFFING SERVICE	11,723	4,584	0	0	0	0
531900 TRAINING EXPENSES	1,502	4,930	14,091	50,000	50,000	0
532100 TUITION ASSISTANCE	5,370	3,573	2,743	5,500	5,000	-500
534010 TELEPHONE	1,642	586	634	750	750	0
534020 CELLULAR TELEPHONES	1,384	1,953	1,981	2,500	1,750	-750
534100 POSTAGE	3,759	2,061	1,390	3,000	2,000	-1,000
534200 PRINTING	1,261	1,509	1,113	1,300	1,300	0
534300 ADVERTISING/PUBLICATIO	12,302	1,675	5,325	5,000	5,000	0
537100 MEDICAL SERVICES	0	2,000	57,536	57,000	57,000	0
537200 MEDICAL SCREENINGS	5,435	24,999	2,950	0	0	0
537201 PREPLACEMENT SCREENI	42,368	39,716	0	0	0	0
542000 OFFICE SUPPLIES	5,629	4,734	2,272	6,500	5,000	-1,500
571000 VEHICLE USE REIMBURSE	49	157	0	300	300	0
571100 IN-STATE CONFERENCES	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
571200 REFRESHMENTS/MEALS	599	290	0	1,500	500	-1,000
573000 DUES & SUBSCRIPTIONS	320	669	156	1,500	1,500	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	201,857	223,200	251,003	224,750	223,600	-1,150
FRINGE BENEFITS						
570200 UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT	89,620	137,843	104,759	100,000	100,000	0
57DENT DENTAL INSURANCE	2,252	2,295	1,980	2,408	2,408	0
57HLTH HEALTH INSURANCE	61,137	51,200	49,407	75,986	92,792	16,806
57LIFE BASIC LIFE INSURANCE	198	222	227	342	285	-57
57MEDA MEDICARE PAYROLL TAX	7,476	6,838	6,710	10,228	11,487	1,259
57OPEB OPEB CONTRIBUTION	11,883	12,391	11,171	16,020	21,213	5,193
TOTAL FRINGE BENEFITS	172,566	210,789	174,254	204,983	228,185	23,202
TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES	964,101	948,972	925,990	1,143,188	1,243,961	100,773
TOTAL HUMAN RESOURCES	964,101	948,972	925,990	1,143,188	1,243,961	100,773