2013 Hiring Outlook: Public Sector Hiring Continues to Trend in the Right Direction

IPMA-HR released the results of the Ninth Annual Employment Outlook Survey on February 1, 2013 showing an increase in the number of members expected to hire for new positions in 2013 and a drop in the number of respondents planning lay-offs.

The survey was open from January 14 through January 28, 2013 with 370 respondents. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents are from local/municipal governments, 11 percent from state government, 10 percent from special districts, and one percent from federal government (with the remaining one percent from universities, colleges, or “other”).

Sixty-two percent of respondents said they plan to hire for new positions in fiscal year 2013. This is up from 55 percent in 2012 and 48 percent in 2011. Below is a chart showing the percent of respondents who anticipate hiring for new positions.
Most of the hiring is anticipated in the area of public safety (35 percent) followed by public works (24 percent), finance/management (18 percent), and parks/recreation (13 percent). The top three departments are identical to last year. Public safety and public works have topped the list every year.
Overall the total number of jobs eliminated is expected to represent only a small percentage of the current workforce with 9 percent of respondents indicating that the number will represent less than 1 percent of the current workforce, and significantly smaller numbers indicating it would represent only a slightly higher percentage of the workforce.

Public works and parks and recreation are tied for first place in the area with the most lay-offs but the numbers are very small, with only 3 percent of respondents in each area. This is followed by finance/management and human resources, tied for second place with two percent in each area.

There is a slight decline in the number of employers purposefully leaving vacancies unfilled for budgetary reasons. In 2012, 55 percent of respondents indicated they were keeping these positions unfilled, compared to 43 percent this year. The number continues to trend down from a high of 69 percent in 2010. Pre-recession these numbers ranged from 31 to 39 percent.