

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



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March 26, 2009

National Association of State Personnel Executives
P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Dear Awards Committee:

I am delighted to nominate Ms. Eva Santos, Director, Washington State Department of Personnel, for the 2009 Eugene H. Rooney, Jr., Leadership in State Human Resources Management award.

In 2005, I appointed Ms. Santos during a critical and challenging time. We were in the midst of implementing the most comprehensive personnel system reform in our state's history. I needed a visionary leader and progressive thinker — someone who could confidently manage the change and keep our state agencies working together. Eva Santos was the perfect person for the job.

Today, Washington, like most other states, is experiencing serious economic challenges. At a time when our agencies face the difficult task of laying off employees, Ms. Santos has redeployed her recruitment staff and quickly mounted a coordinated effort to support agencies and our employees through this tough process. The Department of Personnel continues to demonstrate leadership, flexibility, and responsiveness, which has helped us maintain a strong and productive state workforce.

Ms. Santos also is helping move our state towards a more rigorous, results-oriented performance management system, providing guidance and holding state leaders accountable for their own human resource practices. She is directly responsible for successfully delivering Washington's new Human Resource Management System, which replaces a 30-year-old personnel and payroll computer system. This new application now centrally manages human resource information for more than 100 separate state employers, processing payroll for over 65,000 employees.

Well-respected by state leaders and employees, Ms. Santos has modernized human resources in Washington State. I would be extremely pleased to see her recognized for these efforts. Please direct any questions about this nomination to Department of Personnel Deputy Director Mike Sellars, at (360) 664-6348.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Christine O. Gregoire
Governor

Enclosure



1. Participation: Ms. Santos is an active member of the Governor's cabinet and the chair of HR Subcabinet. The HR Subcabinet includes state leaders responsible for core HR components—employment, benefits and retirement—and other key agency leaders working to achieve a unified human resources vision for Washington. Ms. Santos also sits on the leadership team for the Governor's Management, Accountability and Performance initiative.

As a member of the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), Ms. Santos helps determine and manage the benefits packages available to more than 300,000 Washington residents and employees. The PEBB is a nine-member public entity appointed by the Governor that establishes employee eligibility requirements for state benefits, approves eligible employee premium contributions and approves the benefits offered by all participating health care organizations.

In her capacity as Director of the Washington State Department of Personnel, she is directly responsible for statewide personnel policies, strategic HR planning, the classification and compensation system, recruitment and assessment, HR information systems, training and development, workforce diversity, Affirmative Action and employee relations. A former recipient of the Governor's Leadership in Management Award, Ms. Santos is currently a member of the Governor's Distinguished Leaders Association.

2. Leadership: Originally from Puerto Rico, Ms. Santos has long been involved in the Latino community and women's organizations, encouraging others to take charge of their careers. She has served on several panels for the annual Latino Youth Summit, and has been a leader in the Interagency Committee for State Employed Women. Eva was awarded Hispanic Woman of the Year in 2005 by the state's Hispanic Women's Network.

Nationally, Ms. Santos graciously accepts many speaking engagements. She was the keynote speaker at the Performance Institute's 2007 Women in Executive Leadership Conference, and provided a presentation on the topic of statewide employee surveys at the Institute's 2006 Performance Conference.

Ms. Santos is a breast cancer survivor and certified speaker with the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Awareness Foundation. She has donated many hours traveling the Pacific Northwest region providing outreach and support to community groups. In September 2007, Ms.

Santos joined Governor Gregoire to support a government-wide breast cancer awareness event on the state capital grounds.

In 2004, on behalf of former Governor Gary Locke, Ms. Santos negotiated Washington State's first master collective bargaining agreements with employee unions that included wages and benefits, in the capacity as Director of the Labor Relations Office. Ms. Santos also served as Deputy Director at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, where she implemented one of the state's first automated leave systems and the widely popular ORCA project that provides stakeholders current on-line worker's compensation claim information.

Early in Ms. Santos' state career, she was selected and participated in the prestigious Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She later brought Professor Bob Behn to Washington to give state leaders more affordable exposure to this program.

3. Implementing HR programs: Ms. Santos stands out from her peers, not only for her accomplishments, but also for the way she gets things done. Her ability to foster collaboration, build teams, "plan-do-check," respond to challenges and inspire those around her make her a natural leader. She values and demonstrates big-picture, strategic and proactive thinking. She is never satisfied with "good enough," but is always figuring out how to get to better.

Not only can she articulate a clear vision for the future, she can "chunk out" the steps to get there. She does the hard work of first building the foundation to support her vision, then creates the plan, aligns the resources and develops a plan to sustain it. She builds and manages partnerships, and gets the right people in the right positions to ensure success. This kind of strategic thinking and ability to assemble strong teams helped her successfully implement many critical components of the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002, which overhauled a 60-year-old civil service system and modernized the state's 30-year-old legacy personnel and payroll application. She replaced the old system in 2005 with a modern Human Resource Management System—the first large-scale, enterprise-wide technology system successfully implemented in Washington state government.

An active advisor to the governor, Ms. Santos has been able to get HR professionals to the table participating in Washington state government decision-making, acting as leaders and

advisors, and has elevated the role of human resources in organizational success. In 2009, she launched a new website (www.dop.wa.gov) that gives agencies improved access to HR tools and services and delivers a new Strategic HR section, providing agencies better data and strategic information. She has put in place the technology and is growing the expertise to allow the state to make more informed, data-driven decisions.

Ms. Santos demands completed staff work, operates with integrity and holds herself to the highest ethical standards. She believes in being a model – “walking the walk” – and makes sure her own agency implements and abides by all operational policies, procedures and systems that other agencies are expected to follow.

4. Outreach and Influence: Ms. Santos has been the Department of Personnel Director and a NASPE member for four years. She currently serves on the NASPE Executive Committee and chairs the Awards Committee. During the past four years, she has elevated the visibility of the NASPE organization among Washington State human resource professionals. She makes certain that the Department of Personnel is active at the national NASPE conferences, presenting in 2007 on Washington’s Performance Management Confirmation process.

As a natural team builder, Ms. Santos frequently reaches out to her peers in other states and has built solid relationships with other state personnel executives. By actively engaging in national HR conversations, responding to national and statewide surveys, staying abreast of current HR news and events, and sharing what she learns with others, Ms. Santos demonstrates her commitment to HR leadership and peer-to-peer networking and support.

Her national influence was clear at a recent *Governing* magazine conference wherein many other state personnel executives expressed great interest in better understanding her leadership role in the Governor’s Management, Accountability and Performance program.

5. Success: In 2005, Ms. Santos adopted new compensation, leave, and layoff rules as a result of statewide personnel reform legislation. The new rules allow agencies, for the first time, to use performance-based tools as part of an overall performance management strategy based on “confirmation” (permission) of the Director of the Department of Personnel. To ensure that performance management was successfully carried out, Ms. Santos put in place a rigorous

confirmation process to assess and evaluate an employer's readiness to fairly and objectively factor performance into compensation and layoff decisions.

As the Department of Personnel Director, Ms. Santos makes the final decision whether or not to grant confirmation. Once confirmed, agencies have access to an array of performance tools, including recognition leave, performance recognition pay and accelerated and deferred progression increases. To date, seven state agencies have successfully been confirmed. Performance Management confirmation is unique to Washington and is one example of Ms. Santos' leadership in improving government accountability.

Representing the business of HR in Washington, Ms. Santos guides statewide HR practices as a member of the leadership team of the nationally recognized Government, Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program, a major initiative improving Washington's management practices through the ongoing analysis of current performance data.

The Governor and her leadership team meet in monthly "GMAP forums" with agency directors to evaluate the results their agencies are delivering. These meetings promote candid conversations about what is working, what is not, and how to improve results. To support this process, Ms. Santos developed the HR Management Report in 2006, which compiles and reports agency performance on key measures. The reports are used by agency leaders and the Governor to make informed workforce decisions.

Data for the reports is pulled, in part, from the Human Resource Management System, the state's new personnel and payroll application. Ms. Santos is responsible for putting in place this modern system, which stands as Washington State's first successful, large-scale enterprise system.

Ms. Santos led the effort to develop and deploy an annual statewide employee survey. With thirteen core questions, the survey provides benchmark data for state workforce decisions. Ms. Santos is developing a full array of statewide workforce planning tools, is responsible for re-tooling the state's classification system, and continues to play a key role in implementing statewide collective bargaining contracts.