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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND YOUTH
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

The Committee on Education, Workforce and Youth (EWY) is responsible for creating opportunities for our young people, ensuring economic opportunity and prosperity for Baltimore's workforce, and supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. The committee's areas of jurisdiction include public education, labor relations, workforce development, employment, public parks, recreation, and youth affairs. Issue areas include, but are not limited to: education, including adult education, higher education, workforce development, labor, senior affairs, veterans, childcare, accessibility and disability issues, recreation and parks, and historical landmarks.

**The Honorable Robert Stokes, Sr.
Chairman**

PUBLIC HEARING

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2022
10:00 AM**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Resolution #22-0104R

Informational Hearing – Degree Requirements for City Positions

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Staff: Richard Krummerich (410-396-1266)



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Education, Workforce and Youth

Resolution: 22-0104R

Informational Hearing – Degree Requirements for City Positions

Sponsor: Councilmember Stokes, et al

Introduced: May 16, 2022

Purpose:

For the purpose of inviting the City Solicitor, the City Administrator, the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, and the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development to brief the City Council regarding the practice of requiring certain degrees for certain City positions and to discuss if eliminating such a degree requirement would be detrimental or beneficial to the recruitment and retention of quality City employees.

Effective: On the date it is enacted.

Agency Reports

Law Department	Comments
City Administrator	None as of this writing
Department of Human Resources	Comments w/Statistical Data
Labor Commissioner	None as of this writing
Mayor’s Office of Employment Development	None as of this writing

Analysis

Current Law

Baltimore City Code – Article 1, Subtitle 1-City Council, Section 1-6

§ 1-6. Agencies to provide legislative information.

It shall be the duty of the head of every City department or bureau established by the Baltimore City Charter or by ordinance to provide all technical materials, plats, drawings, and information that are requested by any member or the President of the City Council for the purpose of introducing legislation into the Council.

(City Code, 1976/83, art. 1, §6.) (Ord. 76-080.)

Background

Why More Tech Companies Are Dropping Degree Requirements When Hiring

If you work in tech and you're having trouble building your team, you're not alone. Not only are people quitting left and right, but there's also a *talent shortage*.

As a result, tech companies are left competing for the same talent pools. Some have shifted to remote work to try to draw people in (or encourage them to stay). But over the years, more and more companies — global companies like Apple, Google, IBM, and even Tesla — are finding that dropping degree requirements for certain positions opens them up to a much wider pool of talented people. And when you think about it, this move is really a no-brainer.

Higher education is no longer a barrier: Knowledge is everywhere

College used to be one of the only places you could go to get the technical knowledge and skills you'd need to launch a career, but that's no longer the case. Learning opportunities abound online, and every day, more and more people are taking their learning into their own hands.

You can retain more knowledge when you learn by doing

Self-taught developers also have an advantage because of the immediacy of their learning.

Say you have two candidates. One is a CS grad who's three months into their first internship. The other is a self-taught developer who spent the past year building different websites to flesh out their portfolio. Who do you go with?

Assuming they're equally skilled, either candidate could be a great choice, but research suggests that the self-taught developer might be more familiar with the critical knowledge and skills they'll use on the job.

Of course, this isn't to say that one way of learning is superior to another — individual people have their own learning styles. It's just that we don't often talk about the pros of less traditional hands-on learning, so it's worth considering the specific benefits that come with it.

Embracing equity: The bias in degree requirements

For many roles, degree requirements only serve to exclude potential candidates — which means they lose out on opportunities while companies lose out on great talent purely because people don't all fit into the same cookie cutter. Ultimately, unnecessary degree requirements reinforce social inequities when alternatives are just as valid. As Danny explains:

Of course, this isn't to say that one way of learning is superior to another — individual people have their own learning styles. It's just that we don't often talk about the pros of less traditional hands-on learning, so it's worth considering the specific benefits that come with it.

"In an era where your traditional university is increasingly out of reach for your average person from a cost perspective, it's important to consider why that degree requirement exists. With that in mind, it's even more important if an organization is serious about diversity. Guess who can typically afford the traditional university experience? Let's just say it's not often students who come from diverse backgrounds."

In an article for [NPR](#), Byron Auguste, economist and CEO of [Opportunity@Work](#), sheds more light on the issue — explaining how arbitrary degree requirements "screen out 70% of African-Americans, 80% of Latinos, and 80% of rural Americans of all races."

Dropping unnecessary degree requirements helps under-privileged groups obtain more gainful employment, and it's a great way to demonstrate your commitment to DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). And, according to Danny, it also opens the door to valuable new perspectives.

Still, embracing equity involves more than dropping degree requirements. Mindful onboarding and ongoing education helps set people up for success, and this can be achieved through tools like [Codecademy Teams](#) and [Teams+](#) or even providing structured on-the-job mentoring opportunities.

There's a strong case to be made for dropping degree requirements, and it's worth considering if you're looking to maximize your pool of candidates. For more tips on building a strong team, check out the articles below.

Maryland will no longer require four-year degrees for thousands of state jobs

Posted: March 16, 2022

No college degree necessary: Thousands of state government jobs in Maryland will be available to people without four-year college educations, Gov. Larry Hogan announced.

Gov. Larry Hogan announced today.

The state is launching what the governor calls a "first in the nation" workforce development program to recruit qualified workers who do not hold college degrees. Rolling back the barrier will help fill government positions left vacant during the pandemic, the governor said during a press conference. More than 300 state jobs that don't require four-year degrees are currently open and posted online, he added.

It's "more important than ever that we work together to find new ways to build a steady pipeline of talented, well-trained, skilled workers for the jobs of the future," Hogan said.

Around 38,000 people are currently employed by the state of Maryland, and nearly half of those jobs could be performed by qualified candidates without four-year degrees, according to the governor. Hogan said that other qualifications, including relevant experience, training, or community college education, will be given equal weight for many state government positions in IT, administrative work, and customer service.

Maryland is teaming up with workforce development nonprofit [Opportunity@Work](#) to vet non-degree-holding candidates for state jobs.

"We really want an economy that if you can do the job, you can get the job," Byron Auguste, CEO of [Opportunity@Work](#), said during Tuesday's press conference. The organization calls qualified non-degree workers "STARS," short for "skilled through alternative routes."

STARS represent an "untapped pool" of workers who can help the state fill crucial positions, Hogan said. "People shouldn't be compensated based on their years of education, but what their skills are to do the job," he added.

Hundreds of unfilled state government positions are now posted on Maryland's job board. Outside of Maryland, the D.C. government also has a large number of job openings; the city is hosting two virtual career fairs this week to help fill them. Jobs that require four-year degrees effectively discriminate against millions of veterans and workers of color across the U.S., according to Opportunity@Work. Roughly two-thirds of workers in the U.S. do not have a bachelor's degree, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"Requiring a medical degree to treat patients or a civil engineering degree to design a bridge is common sense," Auguste wrote **in a Washington Post op-ed last year**. "By contrast, requiring a generic college degree to be considered for jobs such as office manager, sales representative, digital marketer or data-center technician may be common, but it makes no sense."

On Thursday September 22, 2022, The Workforce Education and Youth Committee will hold a hearing with pertinent agency representatives to discuss Degree Requirements for city positions.

Councilmember Glover, primary sponsor to the Resolution submitted an amendment. See attached copy.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Code, Council Resolution 22-0104R, and all agency reports received as of this writing.

Marguerite M. Currin
Analysis by: Marguerite M. Currin
Analysis Date: September 19, 2022

Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485

AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL BILL 22-0104R
(1st Reader Copy)

By: Councilmember Glover
{To be offered to the Education, Workforce, and Youth Committee}

Amendment No. 1

On page 2, strike beginning with “**Baltimore**” in line 9 down through and including “**Labor**” in line 10 and substitute “**Baltimore City Labor Commissioner**”.

Council Resolution 22-0107R

Agency Reports

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW

JAMES L. SHEA
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

June 27, 2022

Honorable President
Members of the City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary
409 City Hall
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: Council Bill 22-0104R – Investigative Hearing – Degree Requirements for
Baltimore City Positions

Dear President and Members:

The Law Department reviewed City Council Bill 22-0104R. The bill requests that the City Solicitor, the City Administrator, the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, and the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development brief the City Council regarding the practice of requiring degrees from institutions of higher learning for certain City positions, and to discuss whether eliminating such a degree requirement would be detrimental or beneficial to the recruitment and retention of City employees.

In general, Art. III, §9 of the City Charter and City Code Art. 1, §1-4 give the City Council authority to study or investigate the operation of City agencies and to make recommendations for the more effective operation of the agencies. Article III, §9 of the Charter requires department heads, municipal officers not embraced in a department, and members of commissions and boards to appear before the City Council if so requested to participate in the discussion of matters relating to their respective departments, offices, commissions, or boards.

Council Bill 22-0104R is an appropriate resolution to initiate this process and request the specified officials to attend to provide information on degree requirements for certain City positions and to discuss how eliminating the degree requirement would affect recruitment and retention of City employees.

The Law Department approves Council Bill 22-0104R for form and legal sufficiency as it is a valid method of inviting the City officials noted in the bill to discuss this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Michele Toth
Special Solicitor

cc: Natasha Mehu
Nikki Thompson
Nina Themelis
Sofia Gebrehiwot
Elena DiPietro
Hilary Ruley
Ashlea Brown
Jeff Hochstetler
Dereka Bolden



July 25, 2022

To the Honorable City Council President, Nick Mosby,
and Members of the Baltimore City Council
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, Room 409
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: CC Bill 22-0104R Informational Hearing – Degree Requirements for City Positions

The Department of Human Resources (“DHR”) has reviewed City Council Bill 22-0104R Informational Hearing – Degree Requirements for City Positions. For the purpose of inviting the City Solicitor, the City Administrator, the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, and the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development to brief the City Council regarding the practice of requiring certain degrees for certain City positions and to discuss if eliminating such a degree requirement would be detrimental or beneficial to the recruitment and retention of quality City employees.

DHR has reviewed the above-referenced bill and eliminating degree requirements for positions that are not highly specialized may be beneficial to the recruitment and retention of quality employees. Although formal education gives employees knowledge that may benefit employees, formal education is not an indication of successful job performance. Additionally, a recent ManpowerGroup survey of 2,000 employers found that over 50% of organizations listed problem-solving, collaboration, customer service, and communication as the most-valued skills they seek in employees, over formal education¹. The Office of Classification and Compensation in DHR is responsible for establishing the minimum qualifications for all City positions. The minimum qualifications are set based on market research for comparable positions. Once the minimum qualifications are established for a particular classification, they are not changed unless an agency within the City requests an update or a state mandate takes effect that requires the change. Between April and May 2022, Classification and Compensation updated classification specifications for Environmental Sanitarian, Police Information Technician, and Loan Processor.

Anecdotally, positions in Accounting, Arboriculture, Horticulture, and Forestry, are areas where difficulty in recruitment has resulted from degree requirements. Positions within these fields require at least a bachelor’s degree and 2-5 years of experience in order to advance beyond an assistant level position, however, in most of these positions there are equivalencies for the

¹ Chamorro-Premuzic, T., & Frankiewicz, B. (2019, August 2). *Does Higher Education still prepare people for jobs?* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved July 12, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2019/01/does-higher-education-still-prepare-people-for-jobs>

required education. A candidate would need at least an additional four (4) years of experience to be eligible for positions at the lead, supervisory, or managerial level, despite having significant work history and demonstrated capacity.

Requiring individuals to have a bachelor's or even master's degree to qualify for or advance in a given field is a widely and historically recognized best practice, to ensure that individuals have the knowledge required to successfully perform their jobs. More recently, however, it has been recognized that requiring degrees for fields that are not highly specialized or fields in which experience is more valuable and practical than education, may hinder a candidate's ability to advance within the field. The practice of requiring a degree for advancement is especially impactful for long-time employees who have experience but not formal education. Although education is not always an indication of true ability to perform the job duties at a competent level, it may be necessary for highly specialized or technical positions in certain professional fields. Moreover, there are some classifications where education is required to obtain certifications required by law.

The Department of Human Resources supports best practices that attract and retain quality candidates for employment within the City of Baltimore. To that end, continually analyzing hiring practices and qualification requirements is a step toward innovating, and providing more opportunities for a greater and more effective workforce.

We have performed an anecdotal analysis to compare the City's degree requirements to other municipalities in the state. Please see the below analysis for a brief comparison of the city to our local comparators. For additional questions or concerns, contact me at Quinton.Herbert@baltimorecity.gov or by phone at (410) 396-1563.

Sincerely,

Quinton Herbert, JD

DHR Anecdotal Analysis – Posted Vacancies and Degree Requirements – Maryland Municipalities

Currently, there are a total of 2,415 Civil Service vacancies within the City of Baltimore. Of those vacancies, 766 (32%) require a degree, with the following distributions among the types of degrees (*Chart 1*):

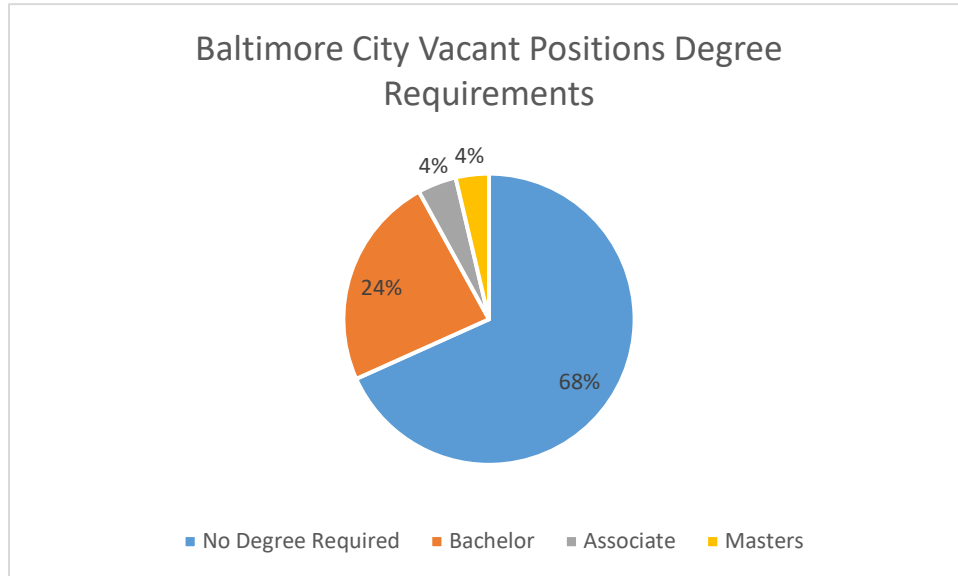


Chart 1 – Bachelor’s degrees account for the majority of degrees needed for the City of Baltimore’s currently vacant positions.

As total vacancy information is not available for similar jurisdictions, an anecdotal review of currently posted positions within Baltimore City and similar jurisdictions revealed similar degree requirements for jobs currently posted in various Maryland municipalities. Within Baltimore City, there are currently 179 of 211 posted positions (85%) that require a degree, with the following distributions among the types of degrees (*Table 1*):

Baltimore City Degree Requirement	Count	Percentage
Bachelors	137	65%
No Degree Required	32	15%
Masters	26	12%
Associates	15	7%
Doctorate	1	0%
Grand Total	211	100%

Table 1 – Bachelor’s degrees are needed for the majority of Baltimore City’s positions.

Baltimore County currently has 122 of 161 posted positions (76%) that require a degree, with the following distributions among the types of degrees (*Table 2*):

Baltimore County Degree Requirement	Count	Percentage
Bachelors	81	50%
No Degree Required	39	24%
Associates	29	18%
Masters	11	7%
Doctorate	1	1%
Grand Total	161	100%

Table 2 – Similar to Baltimore City’s requirements, Bachelor’s degrees are needed for half of Baltimore County’s positions.

Anne Arundel County currently has 48 of 100 posted positions (48%) that require a degree with the following distributions (*Table 3*):

Anne Arundel County Degree Requirement	Count	Percentage
No Degree Required	52	52%
Bachelors	37	37%
Masters	7	7%
Associates	4	4%
Grand Total	100	100%

Table 3 – The majority of Anne Arundel County’s positions do not have a degree requirement; however, more than a third require a Bachelor’s degree.

Montgomery County has 104 of 121 posted positions (86%) that require a degree with the following distributions (*Table 4*):

Montgomery County Degree Requirement	Count	Percentage
Bachelors	88	73%
No Degree Required	17	14%
Masters	10	8%
Associates	6	5%
Grand Total	121	100%

Table 4 – Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of Montgomery County’s positions require a Bachelor’s degree. They are the most stringent in terms of requiring degrees for their positions.

Prince George’s County has 32 of 59 positions (54%) that require a degree with the following distributions (*Table 5*):

Prince Georges County Degree Requirement	Count	Percentage
No Degree Required	27	46%
Bachelors	25	42%
Masters	7	12%
Grand Total	59	100%

Table 5 – The positions that require a Bachelors degree and those which require no degree are nearly equal within Prince Georges County.

Comparatively, Baltimore City is third among its similar jurisdictions in both the percentage of open positions which require any level of degree and those that specifically require a bachelor’s degree, which indicates that Baltimore City’s requirements are in line with the requirements of similar jurisdictions. However, Baltimore City is second to last among these same jurisdictions in relation to positions that have no degree requirements at 15% (*Chart 2*):

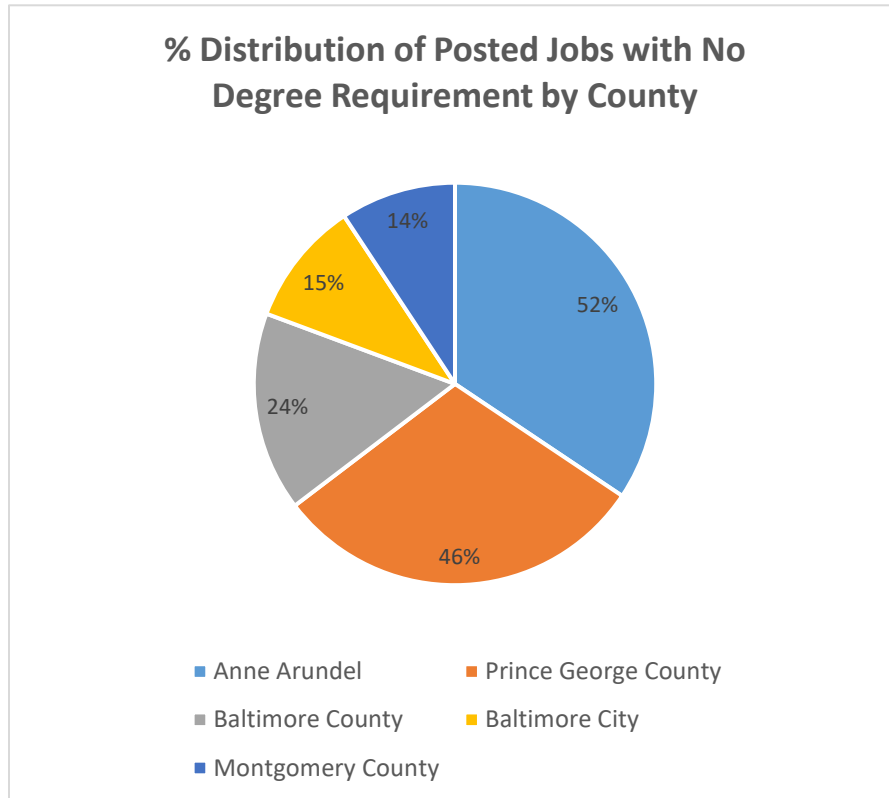


Chart 2 – Baltimore City has the second lowest percentage of positions for which there are no degree requirements.

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 22-0104R
(First Reader)

Introduced by: Councilmember Glover, Conway, Burnett, Torrence, Cohen, Stokes

Introduced and read first time: April 25, 2022

Assigned to: Education, Workforce, and Youth Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, City Administrator, Department of Human Resources, Department of Labor, Mayor's Office of Employment Development

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing — Degree Requirements for City Positions**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting the City Solicitor, the City Administrator, the Director of the
4 Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner,
5 and the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development to brief the City
6 Council regarding the practice of requiring certain degrees for certain City positions and to
7 discuss if eliminating such a degree requirement would be detrimental or beneficial to the
8 recruitment and retention of quality City employees.

9 **WHEREAS**, possession of a degree from an institution of higher education does not
10 necessarily correlate to higher pay for a graduate.

11 **WHEREAS**, many individuals who have attended an institution of higher education have
12 amassed student loan debt and are unable to recover financially due to low wages paid for
13 positions requiring a degree from an institution of higher education.

14 **WHEREAS**, career programs, apprenticeships, and employment experience can duly prepare
15 individuals to succeed in the workforce.

16 **WHEREAS**, Baltimore City has experienced difficulty in retaining certain employees with a
17 degree from an institution of higher education.

18 **WHEREAS**, certain functions of many positions are entry-level and do not require skills
19 conferred from a degree from an institution of higher education.

20 **WHEREAS**, the elimination of certain degree requirements may help to decrease turnover of
21 City employees.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 22-0104R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the
2 Baltimore City Council invites the City Solicitor, the City Administrator, the Director of the
3 Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, and
4 the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development to brief the City Council
5 regarding the practice of requiring certain degrees for certain City positions and to discuss if
6 eliminating such a degree requirement would be detrimental or beneficial to the recruitment and
7 retention of quality City employees.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the City Solicitor,
9 the City Administrator, the Baltimore City Department of Human Resources, the Baltimore City
10 Department of Labor, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, and the Mayor’s
11 Legislative Liaison to the City Council.