

June 8, 2023

To the SSHIX Board of Directors,

I'm writing to express my interest in the position of Executive Director for the Silver State Health Insurance Exchange. I began working for the Exchange as Information Systems Manager in July of 2016, and I've dedicated the last seven years of my professional life to ensuring the success of Nevada's State Based Exchange Platform. During this time I've garnered substantial experience in every area of the SSHIX's operations, which I believe uniquely qualifies me to lead the Exchange through the next phase of its development and maturation as a state agency.

When I began work for the Exchange Bruce Gilbert was laying the groundwork for our transition away from the HealthCare.gov platform, something which had only been attempted by one other state. Heather Korbolic then had the unenviable task of overseeing that transition, while also maintaining continuity with Nevada's federally-facilitated operations. Later, Heather and Ryan High worked to stabilize our state-based operations, and today SSHIX is among the highest performing State Based Exchanges in the nation, despite employing only a fraction of the personnel working for any other SBE. It's my perspective that the future success of this agency depends upon securing the stability that's been attained by our previous administrators, while also achieving incremental gains in each of the Exchange's program areas. More specifically, I believe the Exchange is in need of a strategic plan which defines goals and strategies for achieving these incremental gains, both within our agency and amongst our key stakeholders.

Recently I announced my intention to apply for this position to our staff, and since that time I've had the privilege to speak with many of them and gather their thoughts on what changes this agency would need to make to increase their satisfaction and fulfillment in the workplace. I received no shortage of constructive criticism, but the good news is that there was a great deal of alignment in what I heard. One common sentiment was a lack of training resources, both on the ACA policy level, as well as on the functional role level within the Exchange. Another was a lack of effective delegation or distribution of responsibility. As someone who accumulated an increasingly outsized share of agency responsibilities during our transition phase I can confirm not only that this is a serious issue, but also that this has been a difficult obstacle for me to overcome in my current position. And on a related note, many staff members expressed their belief that a lack of individual empowerment—including a shortage of opportunities to learn from their own mistakes—was preventing them from reaching their full potential. I believe that my long-standing relationships with these individuals, as well as the trust that they exhibited in sharing this information with me, would allow me to gradually implement the changes that would be required to achieve an optimal level of agency performance and workplace satisfaction.

I also see many opportunities for improvements outside of our agency. In recent months I've had the distinct pleasure of working in collaboration with several of Nevada's Tribal Health Clinics to develop a solution for the aggregated payment of monthly premiums for tribal members. The enthusiasm that I've witnessed has convinced me that a commitment to reaching Nevada's underserved populations—including a focus on First Nations—should be a cornerstone of the

Exchange's Strategic Plan. I've also spent a great deal of time over the past year working with the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Nevada's Medicaid Administering Entity, on enhancing the integration of our systems in preparation for the unwinding of the Covid-related Public Health Emergency. I feel strongly that furthering these enhancements will play a key role in reducing Nevada's uninsured rate in the coming years. In addition, the Exchange has been working closely with the Division of Insurance to monitor the progress of the Public Health Emergency unwinding, and it's clear to me that a closer working relationship with the DOI will be integral to the Exchange's future success. SSHIX has become quite adept at friendly negotiation with our on-Exchange insurance carriers, and generally speaking these partnerships have remained immensely healthy. But I'm confident the DOI could help us achieve some of the regulatory leverage that we've lacked at times.

In summary, I believe I possess the relationships, program knowledge, and proven track record required to effectively lead the Exchange into the future. If given the opportunity to serve as Executive Director I can not only assure you of an unparalleled level of transparency regarding the Exchange's trials and successes, I can also assure you that I will work tirelessly to turn the commitments expressed in this letter into a reality.

I'm honored to share the following professional references, each of whom I've had the pleasure of working with in different capacities during my time at SSHIX:

Heather Korbolic

[Redacted]

Janel Davis

[Redacted]

Rebecca Lomazzo

[Redacted]

With the utmost gratitude for your consideration,



Russell Cook

[Redacted]

## RUSSELL COOK

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### **Information Systems Manager/ISO – Silver State Health Insurance Exchange (State of Nevada) – Carson City, NV**

Managed the successful transition of Nevada's ACA marketplace operations away from HealthCare.gov and helped establish its current State Based Exchange operations. Designed, developed, and implemented an online system for the collaborative resolution of ACA consumer complaints using the Salesforce platform, which has been used by over 130 insurance carrier personnel and 12 Exchange staff members to resolve over 12,000 cases. Designed and implemented the Exchange's monthly data reconciliation process, then optimized that process using SQL analysis of enrollment data. Ensured continued compliance with MARS-E Privacy/Security regulations by co-authoring and maintaining the Exchange's System Security Plan and accompanying Policy and Procedure documents. Managed two cycles' (six years') worth of MARS-E Independent Security Assessments, including vendor procurement. Developed test plans and led UAT activities during the Exchange's implementation phase. Met regularly with the Exchange's 13 insurance carriers to document the capabilities and limitations of their systems, and used that information to develop carrier-specific procedures for corrective action. Served as a primary communications liaison for the Exchange's insurance carriers, and facilitated monthly allcarrier meetings with over 100 attendees.

*July 2016 - Present*

#### **Business Process Analyst – EITS Project Management Group (State of Nevada) – Carson City, NV**

Managed long-term, enterprise-level IT projects within the Departments of Administration and Public Safety. Developed business and functional requirements, coordinated programmer resources and vendor/contractor services, managed Quality Assurance and User Acceptance testing, and scheduled deployments. Served as an IT liaison and primary point of contact for EITS' enterprise customers, providing policy recommendations and technical direction as needed.

*November 2015 - July 2016*

#### **Business Process Analyst – Department of Administration (State of Nevada) – Carson City, NV**

Documented functional requirements, managed release schedules, and coordinated user acceptance testing for the Nevada Executive Budget System (NEBS), as well as numerous public-facing websites, in collaboration with EITS developers. Developed database-driven web applications for the Budget Division and the Department's Director's Office using Microsoft's .NET MVC platform. Configured and administered the application/database servers supporting these websites.

*March 2012 - October 2015*

### EDUCATION

#### **B.S. Recording Arts – University of Southern California, 1999**

Major coursework included media production, audio engineering, computer-based recording and composition, electrical engineering and circuit design, digital signal processing, architectural acoustics, psychoacoustics, audio and video compression and preparation for internet/film/DVD, as well as music theory, ear training, music history, orchestration, and composition.

### COMPUTER SKILLS

**Development:** Salesforce Custom Development, Microsoft Visual Studio/.NET MVC/Code, Windows Server/SQL Server Administration, SOAP/REST API implementation, Git/TFS version control

**Programming Languages:** C#, SQL, Salesforce Apex, JavaScript, HTML/CSS, XML, Python, Ruby

**Business Applications:** MS Word/Excel/Access, MS Project/Visio, Adobe InDesign/Photoshop/Illustrator, Adobe Acrobat Pro

June 6, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing on behalf of Russell Cook, who is currently seeking the position of Executive Director. Russell began working for the Exchange in July, 2016, when I was serving as Operations Manager. At that time the Exchange was developing its initial strategy for transitioning away from HealthCare.gov and towards operations as a State Based Exchange, and Russell was asked to make this transition a focal point of his work. Throughout 2017 he advanced this process by coordinating a Request for Information from the leading vendors in the arena, working with CMS to secure approval for Nevada's "No Wrong Door" Medicaid/CHIP integration model, and testifying before Nevada's Legislature in support of what would become our transition budget.

In early 2018, when I was serving as Executive Director, the Exchange issued an RFP for the State Based Exchange platform and associated call center. Russell served as lead author for the RFP, and he also managed the subsequent vendor selection process and worked closely with myself and our Deputy Attorney General during contract negotiation. During this time Russell additionally worked with the State Purchasing Division to secure contracted staff, including a dedicated Project Manager, to support the implementation phase of the transition. Over the next year he worked with the project manager and contracted staff to author training materials for Exchange personnel and key stakeholders; transition the Exchange's insurance carriers to the new state-based platform; migrate consumer data for approximately 75,000 existing enrollees from the HealthCare.gov platform; and author a comprehensive set of federal compliance documentation, including policy and procedure manuals for critical business functions, which allowed the Exchange to gain and maintain its Authority to Operate and Authority to Connect to the Federal Data Services Hub. In short, Russell's work was integral to the success of the transition.

Since early 2019 Russell has publicly represented the Exchange to our insurance carrier community by facilitating monthly all-carrier meetings, and he also oversees the operations of the Exchange's Reconciliation team. This work involves regular meetings with individual insurance carriers to investigate and resolve enrollment discrepancies or associated consumer complaints. As a result Russell has developed constructive working relationships with each of its carriers. He also worked closely with the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS), Nevada's Medicaid Administering Entity, to ensure successful implementation of the Account Transfer referral process during the transition, and during my last few months with the Exchange in late 2021 Russell was already meeting regularly with DWSS to begin formulating the Exchange's response plan for the unwinding of the pandemic-related Public Health Emergency.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Heather Korbolic

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "HEATHER KORBOLIC". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Former Executive Director, Nevada Health Link/Silver State Health Insurance Exchange

Dear SSHIX Board of Directors,

I am writing this letter to recommend Russell Cook for the position of Executive Director of Nevada Health Link. I have had the privilege of working closely with Russell for over six years, and during this time, I have witnessed his exceptional leadership skills, dedication, and commitment to Nevada Health Link.

Russell possesses qualities that make him an ideal candidate for the Executive Director position. Russell has experience and understanding of healthcare systems and policies. Russell's ability to navigate complex challenges and devise solutions is truly commendable. Russell knows the ins and outs of our agency.

Russell has exceptional leadership skills and has a talent for inspiring and motivating his team members. Russell's approachable and supportive nature has earned him the respect and admiration of his team members, who look up to him as a trusted mentor and advisor.

Aside from his exceptional professionalism, Russell is a person of integrity and ethical standards in all his endeavors. His genuine compassion for others, combined with his strong moral compass, has earned him the trust and confidence of all those who have had the pleasure of working with him.

In conclusion, I support Russell for the position of Executive Director of Nevada Health Link, and I have no doubt that he will excel in the role and contribute greatly to our agency's continued success.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Lomazzo

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