



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/16/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Angela Struckmann 707-565-5800; Katie Greaves 707-565-8501

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Economic Assistance Division Position Requests

Recommended Action:

- A. Adopt a resolution amending the Department Allocation List for the Human Services Department, effective July 16, 2024 to add one full time equivalent Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst and to extend the end date of 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Time-Limited Program Planning and Evaluation Analyst to June 30, 2025.
- B. Adopt a budget resolution adjusting the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget to increase appropriations by \$417,900.
(4/5th Vote Required)
- C. Approve the dual-fill of 10.0 Full-Time Equivalent Eligibility Specialist II positions effective July 16, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

Executive Summary:

The Human Services Department requests Board approval to add a 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst and to extend a time-limited 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst from September 30, 2024, to June 30, 2025, effective July 16, 2024, along with approval to increase appropriations by \$417,900 to account for the positions. The positions are needed to increase training capacity in the Economic Assistance division to address the need for both Eligibility Specialist induction training and ongoing training for all staff. The Human Services Department also requests approval to dual-fill 10.0 Full-Time Equivalent Eligibility Specialist II positions for three years to mitigate the impact that staffing vacancies have on service delivery to the community.

Discussion:

The Human Services Department (HSD) Economic Assistance (EA) division is challenged by ongoing staffing vacancies, especially in the Eligibility Specialist II job classification, along with increases in workload related to pandemic era benefits changes and an increase in clients applying for assistance. Given these significant challenges, clients have experienced delays in receiving eligibility determinations and the resulting benefits for which they may be eligible.

The EA division is implementing a number of measures to reduce client wait times, including increasing the capacity for hiring new staff and training staff to effectively process benefits. In order to increase capacity to hire and train more staff, and to mitigate the effects of staff turnover, the following are being requested for

Board approval:

- 1.) Add 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst (PPEA) to provide ongoing training to increase employees' effectiveness in processing benefits.
- 2.) Extend a time-limited 1.0 FTE PPEA from its current end date of September 30, 2024 to June 30, 2025 to provide induction training to increase the number of new Eligibility Specialists that can be hired and trained.
- 3.) Dual-fill 10.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist II positions to help mitigate the effects of ongoing staff turnover, through June 30, 2027.

The EA division administers the CalFresh and Medi-Cal programs (among others) for low-income residents and people with disabilities in Sonoma County. Approximately 1 in 4 Sonoma County residents receive assistance from the EA division. There are over 280 employees in the division, and continuing turnover in the Eligibility Specialist job classification requires ongoing hiring and training of new employees throughout the year. Currently there are two PPEAs as trainers dedicated to providing the 16-week induction training for up to 24 Eligibility Specialist Is at a time. Due to the regular need to hire and train more staff to meet the staffing needs of the division, a third induction trainer is needed to expand training capacity to bring in more new staff. The extension of the time-limited PPEA position will allow the division to hire and train more staff.

All EA division staff require regular ongoing training to keep up with the ever-changing program regulations that govern the eligibility rules for CalFresh and Medi-Cal. With the recent conversion to the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS), there is an increased need for training to improve and enhance utilization of the system to accurately and efficiently make eligibility determinations. Currently the division has no dedicated trainer for ongoing training needs. The addition of the PPEA will address the unmet training needs of all EA staff.

A significant challenge in timely processing of benefits for the large volume of clients is the regular turnover in the Eligibility Specialist I/II job classifications, including during the induction training process. Of the eight induction classes held since 2020, there has been an average turnover rate of 39% of Eligibility Specialists, which includes not passing the induction or probationary period, being promoted, or resigning within the first year of employment. What makes turnover in the Eligibility Specialist class so challenging is the need for 16 weeks of training for new employees before they have the basic skills necessary to process benefits for clients. Given the complexity of the programs, even after the training period ends it takes a significant amount of time for staff to be fully competent and effective in making eligibility determinations. In order to get ahead of the staff turnover and mitigate the effects of having vacant positions, 10.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist II dual-fills will be used to overfill the number of new Eligibility Specialists hired for induction training classes.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 24-25 Adopted	FY 25-26 Projected	FY 26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$214,500	\$223,100
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$417,900		
Total Expenditures	\$417,900	\$214,500	\$223,100
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$417,900	\$214,500	\$223,100
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$417,900	\$214,500	\$223,100

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

HSD is requesting to increase Fiscal Year 2024-25 appropriations by \$417,900.

The cost for a time-limited 1.0 FTE PPEA in Fiscal Year 2024-25 is \$206,200 at the I-Step. The position will be funded with one-time 1991 realignment fund balance.

The cost for the permanent 1.0 FTE PPEA in Fiscal Year 2024-25 is \$206,200 at the I-Step. This position will be funded with the ongoing Medi-Cal program allocation.

A one-time cost of \$5,500 per new FTE has been added to Fiscal Year 2024-25 for computer and internal rate expenses that include Human Resources (HR) Liability and HR Risk Management costs.

The cost for a 1.0 FTE PPEA in subsequent years is \$214,500 and \$233,100 in Fiscal Years 2025-26 and 2026-27, respectively.

The cost to dual-fill 10.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist IIs in FY 24/25 is \$1,491,000. No additional appropriations are required. HSD will only dual-fill the positions if sufficient funding exists. No additional general fund requested.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst	\$8,064.98 - \$9,802.51	1.0	

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

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The requested extension of the existing time-limited PPEA does not represent an addition, so only the new 1.0 FTE PPEA position will have staffing impacts. Those impacts primarily consist of freeing up other staff who currently provide staff training on top of their regular duties and providing all staff with the training and support they need to be most effective in their jobs.

Attachments:

1. Resolution amending the Department Allocation List for the Human Services Department
2. Budget Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None