



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 1/5/2021

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Angela Struckmann, 707-565-6990

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution designating January 2021 as Eligibility Worker, Employment and Training Specialist and Eligibility Specialist Recognition Month.

Executive Summary:

Nearly 250 Eligibility Workers (EW), Employment and Training Specialists (ETS) and Eligibility Specialists (ES) including their leads and supervisors are employed by Sonoma County.

In 2020, Eligibility Workers, Employment and Training Specialists, and Eligibility Specialists from the Human Services Department provided benefits to over 112,000 individuals throughout Sonoma County in the course of their duties. Eligibility Worker, Employment and Training Specialist and Eligibility Specialist Recognition Month honors these employees for their commitment and dedication to their work and their community.

Discussion:

CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, County Medical Services Program, subsidized Covered California health insurance, and General Assistance provide a crucial safety net and sense of hope for families facing the challenges of difficult health and financial situations. Whether it's a family trying to maintain health insurance coverage, a college student who needs help with food expenses, a homebound senior struggling to afford food and medication, or a parent or grandparent caring for children or grandchildren in need of financial and employment assistance, these programs offer vital services to meet the basic needs of vulnerable community members. Eligibility Workers, Employment and Training Specialists, and Eligibility Specialists are knowledgeable in a wide range of programs and resources and are trained to assist each client obtain the most beneficial program in addition to answering questions of the general public. They are the connection between those in need and programs available through the County and community.

In 2020, Sonoma County experienced a pandemic and two fires that resulted in replacement benefits for thousands of CalFresh clients. During this time, Eligibility Specialists, Employment and Training Specialists, and Eligibility Workers worked tirelessly to address client needs and also responded to new applicants in need of services. Additionally, between March 2020 and November 2020, Eligibility Specialists, Employment and Training Specialists, and Eligibility Workers assisted, in person, over 20,000 clients from the community needing services at our various locations.

Employment and Training Specialists, in the Employment and Training Division, support families participating in the SonomaWORKS program, including those impacted by job losses and homelessness, by delivering

services designed to help lift individuals and families out of poverty. SonomaWORKS provides monthly cash aid to families as well as intensive wrap-around supports and employment services. Since the Shelter-in-Place started in mid-March 2020, SonomaWORKS has received 1,161 applications from families struggling to make ends meet. Employment and Training Specialists are on the front line of keeping families housed. They help get homeless SonomaWORKS families into emergency shelters, including paying for motels, and assist them with finding permanent housing. Employment and Training Specialists assisted with permanently housing 98 families in 2019-2020.

Eligibility Workers assigned to the Family, Youth and Children's Division determine Foster Care payment benefits and Medi-Cal for over 1,400 children in the Foster Care and Adoption systems and ensure that former foster care youth continue to receive Medi-Cal until they are 26 years old.

In our Economic Assistance Division, Eligibility Specialists provide Medi-Cal, CalFresh, County Medical Services Program and General Assistance benefits. During the annual open enrollment period and throughout the year; as a result of life changing events, these Specialists assist families with applications for subsidized insurance and selection of health insurance coverage available from Covered California. Between January 2020 and November 2020, Eligibility Specialists answered almost 42,000 calls from existing clients at the Economic Assistance Service Center. Currently there are over 112,000 Medi-Cal clients that are serviced by the Eligibility Specialists which equates to 1 in 4 people in Sonoma County receiving Medi-Cal through Human Services Eligibility Workers, Employment and Training Specialists, or Eligibility Specialists.

Eligibility Specialists work closely with the Adult and Aging Division's In-Home Supportive Services Social Workers to coordinate Medi-Cal benefits for over 3,000 seniors and residents with disabilities at risk for out-of-home placement.

Additionally, Eligibility Specialists in the Special Investigations Unit safeguard the integrity of the programs and services offered by the Human Services Department by providing quality assurance and opportunities for case work accuracy improvement.

Prior Board Actions:

Every January, the Board honors Eligibility Workers, Employment and Training Specialists, and Eligibility Specialists by designating the month of January as Eligibility Worker, Employment and Training and Eligibility Specialist Recognition Month.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			

Agenda Date: 1/5/2021

Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

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

None