



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-1452, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Nick Honey, 565-4343
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Child Protective Services Social Worker Additional Resources

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the Human Services Department, with the approval of the County Administrator's Office and Human Resources Department, to dual fill up to a total of three positions within the Child Protective Services Social Worker job classification for the 24-month pilot period of October 9, 2019, through October 8, 2021.

Executive Summary:

The Human Services Department requests authorization to create a dual fill pilot program for Child Protective Services Social Workers to provide sustainable staffing levels for child welfare and fully expend State and Federal funding.

Discussion:

On October 20, 1981, the Board of Supervisors approved Resolution #70506, which revised the method of allocation of positions and incorporated the authority to amend position allocations into Section 5 of Salary Ordinance 1905. This Resolution also included the authority to dual fill position allocations under specific circumstances, including the pending retirement or long-term medical leave of an employee in the allocated position. These provisions are now included in Section 5 of Salary Resolution 95-0926. This authority allows departments, with the County Administrator's office (CAO) and Human Resources (HR) Department approval, to hire an individual for an allocated position while another employee remains in that allocation. The request before your Board is to approve a resolution authorizing an expansion of this authority, for a 24-month pilot basis, under the circumstances detailed in this item.

Roughly 90% of the Human Services Department's budget is funded through annual Federal and State allocations. One such program within the Department's budget is the Family, Youth, & Children's Division (FY&C), which provides protective services to children and young adults. Management of staffing within the Child Protective Services Social Worker job classification, which includes 100.5 FTE and is the biggest single cost for the program, helps the Department to fully spend Federal and State dollars in order to maximize utilization of the funding allocations at the end of each fiscal year. This puts the Department in the most advantageous position to receive funding increases in future fiscal years.

Full utilization of these allocations has been hampered in the past, in part, by administrative barriers that

inhibit the filling of vacant positions in a timely manner. Regular turnover (retirements, resignations, employees not passing the probationary period), combined with long-term medical leaves of absence in this classification have resulted in continuous vacancies in this class despite significant efforts to maintain allocated staffing levels through regular and continuous recruitment. FY&C has experienced an average of just over seven vacant positions each month during the past three calendar years. This ongoing vacancy rate has significantly impacted the Department's ability to effectively serve clients, as well as its ability to maximize State and Federal funding allocations. FY&C has had to reassign workers into priority programs and has been unable to meet all the service needs of children and families. In addition to vacancies, FY&C currently has 14 CPS Social Workers on medical leave and on average during any period during the past three years has averaged over ten employees on medical leave each month. This results in a significant percentage (roughly 10%) of caseload that must be covered by other CPS Social Workers. While the Division successfully recruited in Spring 2019 and filled seven vacant CPS Social Worker positions, one vacancy has already been announced due to a resignation.

Between 2003 and 2016, the timely response rate for 10-day referrals never dropped below 90%. Then, for the past three years (2016 - 2018) this important measure of timely response to allegations of child abuse and neglect decreased to an average of 78%. The vacancy rate, along with a continuously high number of medical leaves, impacted FY&C's ability to meet the state standard response time of 95%. Further, these vacancies and leaves have impacted the ability to fully utilize state and federal funding allocations. For example, in Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the 8% vacancy rate in the FY&C unit resulted in \$1.2 million of funding allocations for permanent FTE's going unused, requiring instead use of substantial extra help and overtime to attempt to keep up with caseloads. Excessive overtime leads to staff burnout and further contributes to leaves of absence due to stress.

The Department, working in conjunction with HR and the CAO, has developed a possible solution, as outlined below:

1. Authorize Human Services, with CAO and HR approval, to dual fill up to a total of three positions within the Child Protective Services Social Worker job class. This will allow Human Services to optimize the use of its budgeted Federal and State allocations and serve vulnerable clients.
2. Human Resources will monitor the hiring and turnover activity in these classes to ensure the total number of employees does not exceed the approved dual position hiring authority.
3. Human Services, in conjunction with Human Resources and CAO, will monitor the hiring and turnover activity in these positions.

Success Factors:

The Department would have more flexibility to utilize its overall fiscal allocation, based on optimizing the number of staff working during vacancies and long-term unpaid leaves. This approach would also result in a better candidate pool than using extra-help staff, as the Department would be able to offer regular, ongoing positions with benefits. The Department's experience is that the pool of candidates available for extra-help employment is limited and does not necessarily include the best qualified candidates.

Specific criteria to measure the pilot's success will include:

1. Greater utilization of the Department's budgeted Federal and State revenue. The Division believes the dual filling of up to three positions will help increase utilization of funding allocations for permanent staff from an average of 92% during FY 18-19 to 96% during the pilot period.
2. Faster response times to allegations of child abuse and neglect and reduced caseload for Child Protective Services Social Workers. The Division believes the dual filling of up to three positions will help increase the response rate to 10-day referrals from an average of 78% during the past three years to over 90% during the pilot period.

In the event that these two criteria are met to the Department's, HR's, and CAO's satisfaction at the end of the two-year pilot period, the Department will return to the Board to request continuation of the project on an ongoing basis.

Prior Board Actions:

On June 26, 2007, the Board approved Resolution 07-0588 which authorized the dual filling of positions in the Eligibility Worker, Employment and Training Specialist, and Employment and Training Counselor job series for a period of 24 months to test a dual fill project to optimize staffing levels in the Human Services Department's Employment & Training Division.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$364,281	\$500,279	\$128,822
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$364,281	\$500,279	\$128,822
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$364,281	\$500,279	\$128,822
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$364,281	\$500,279	\$128,822

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

No county General Fund is required to fund the payroll cost of these 3.0 FTE dual filled positions. HSD can use salary savings projected for the whole Human Services Department in FY 2019-20 to cover expenditure appropriations for the aforesaid CPS Social Workers in the remaining three quarters of FY 2019-20 without need for a budget adjustment, but increased costs will actually be paid for by Federal & State revenue sources. The same funding methodology will be used to pay for the dual filled positions in FY 2020-21 and the 1st quarter of FY 2021-2022, which are the remaining 15 months of the proposed 24-month pilot program.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
None - see narrative below			

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The requested Board action does not require the addition of any position allocations, but rather uses existing allocations where vacancies and long-term employee leaves of absence justify dual filling positions.

Attachments:

Resolution

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

Resolution #07-0588