



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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February 1, 2017

TO: San Benito County Board of Supervisors

From: James Rydingsword

Re: Request for additional positions

The Health and Human Services Agency provides a wide array of public assistance benefits to the residents of San Benito County. Currently there are 15,902 individuals on Medi-Cal and all the changes are processed by thirty (30) Eligibility Workers. During the budget process for fiscal year 2016-2017 the Health & Human Services Agency (HHSA) requested two (2) additional Eligibility Worker positions. This request was denied. Since January 2016, the HHSA has hired and promoted thirteen (13) staff, separated four (4) and hired eight (8) as of January 9, 2017. During the last fiscal year, HHSA added a Staff Services Analyst position for Staff Development and to conduct the Eligibility Worker (EW) induction training in-house. The induction portion of the training process takes approximately three (3) months and then another three (3) months of closely supervised on the job training. This turn over and length of the training process has exacerbated the issue of past due applications and renewals, such that HHSA has already worked a significant amount of overtime. During the FY15/16 fiscal year overtime was mandated at 16 hours a month for all eligibility staff. During this fiscal year overtime was switched to a voluntary system with limited participation. Current staffing levels indicate that the need for overtime will persist for the foreseeable future.

HHSA has reorganized the CalWORKs division to separate eligibility functions from welfare to work and job readiness functions. This shift will allow staff to focus on a primary task, such as the clients' job readiness and self-sufficiency, instead of the entire eligibility and case work process. In doing so HHSA has found that previously requested two (2) EW positions are indeed necessary and key to reaching and maintaining current status on the caseload.

HHSA is also requesting to add six (6) limited term Eligibility Worker I/II positions. In accordance with San Benito County Personnel Policy (Rule 1 Section H 4. A.), these six positions will be limited to no more than six months in any fiscal year. These limited term positions will allow for the increase in staff needed to help eliminate the backlog (total 486 applications past due) and keep the work load current going forward. Further, as attrition occurs the HHSA would be in a position to swiftly transition an EW into regular positions as they are vacated. Statistics also show that the Medi-Cal case load



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has steadily increased in the past 12 months at just over 8% (Dec 2015 - 7,364 cases & Dec 2016 – 8,013 cases).

The CalWORKs shift and the addition of limited term staff will also result in the need for one additional lead staff at the EW III level and one additional support staff at the Office Assistant II level. These two positions are requested at permanent full time status.

The HHSA analysis of time study data has shown that over the most recent twelve months (Calendar 2016) the HHSA had an average of 39.75 positions filled of the 50 total authorized for eligibility functions; with four (4) positions on some type of “leave” at any given point in time. Considering various absences and vacancies (currently 6) the HHSA is averaging only 5,000 of the possible 8,000 hours, per time study month, in time costs to reimbursable programs. The turnover rate during 2016 for Eligibility Workers alone is 22%. The difference of 3,000 hours per month equates to 36,000 hours per year of lost time that could otherwise be charged to reimbursable programs. Given that there are 2,080 hours per year per employee, the 36,000 hours calculates to almost 17.3 FTE. The addition of four (4) permanent full time positions and six (6) limited term position is a start to begin to gain ground on lost productivity.

Administrative cost claims have shown that as of the end of the first quarter of this fiscal year (09/30/16) HHSA is 23% spent which is just below the target of 25% expenditure to the Medi-Cal Administrative allocation. This is reflective of the amount of overtime spent and 40 eligibility workers employed. The second quarter time study (November 2016) is 38 eligibility workers and a much higher number of non-productive hours which will result in an even lower percent to target for reimbursable costs.

The most recent information on the State budget confirms that the funding for Medi-Cal Administration remains at the current fiscal year amount. While the direction of our clients' health care is unknown at this time, the current program requirements for processing applications and renewals remains in place.

In summation HHSA is requesting the following additional staff positions:

- 1 Full time Office Assistant @ \$45,000
- 2 Full time Eligibility Worker I/II @ \$70,000 each
- 1 Full time Eligibility Worker III @ \$75,000
- 6 Full time limited term (6 months) Eligibility Worker I/II @ \$35,000 each

Total additional staff costs to be claimed for reimbursement is approximately \$470,000. These funds will be reimbursed by State and Federal Social Services allocations as well as Realignment funding. There is no effect to the County General Fund.

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