



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/25/2020

---

File #: 20-217

---

**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Public Defender

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**SUBJECT:**

Extension of Extra-Help Hours - Public Defender budget unit 1100-219 (4/5 Vote Required)

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Extend Jennie Stepanian, Deputy Public Defender extra-help employment hours to a maximum of 1820 hours for fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 pursuant to Section 7 of the Humboldt County Salary Resolution. (4/5 vote required)

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

General Fund 1100-219.

**DISCUSSION:**

Jennie Stepanian has been working as an extra-help attorney during the current fiscal year due to attorney staff shortages resulting from employee transitions, vacancies, and an extended leave of absence. As of January 30, 2020, Jennie was near the annual 960-hour extra-help limit. The Public Defender is requesting an extension of extra-help hours for the remainder of the fiscal year in order to cover daily courtroom assignments and to continue providing effective representation for Public Defender clients.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There are adequate funds allocated in the Salary and Benefits category of the Public Defender budget (1100-219) to absorb the entire projected costs associated with the proposed increase in extra-help hours. The projected maximum salary and benefit costs is \$46,749. There will be no additional impact to the general fund.

All extra help employees working beyond the 960 hours are subject to paying into the California Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). The additional cost for PERS is included in the above-referenced projected salary and benefit costs.

Effective January 2015, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) required large employers with fifty (50) or

more full-time employees to offer health coverage to all full-time employees. A full-time employee is defined as a person who is employed for an average of thirty or more hours per week. The Public Defender is aware of the 2015 federal provisions that impact extra-help employment and is also aware of the county standard measurement period of employee hours will occur over the course of a fifty-two (52) week period. If employed full-time through June 30, 2020, Ms. Stepanian will fall under the guidelines of the requirement to provide health insurance for the current fiscal year. The additional cost for health insurance coverage is included in the above-referenced projected salary and benefit costs.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by providing community-appropriate levels of service.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The board of supervisors could choose not to approve the proposed extension of extra-help hours. The alternative is not recommended. Without the extension of hours for an extra-help Deputy Public Defender, the Public Defender will be forced to decline a significant number of court appointments. Since Public Defender services are mandated and would have to be made available through private counsel, there would be a higher cost per case that would negatively impact the general fund.

ATTACHMENTS:

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A