



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/14/2025

File #: 25-80

To: Board of Supervisors

From: DHHS: Administration

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Allocate 1.0 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Senior Environmental Health Specialist and Deallocate 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Specialist I/II

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Allocate 1.0 FTE Senior Environmental Health Specialist (Job Class 0518, Salary Range 457) in fund 1175, budget unit (BU) 406 effective beginning of the pay period following approval; and
2. Deallocate 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Specialist I/II (Job Class 0535A/B, Salary Range 411/443, Position 02) in fund 1175, BU 406 effective beginning of the pay period following approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Workforce & Operational Excellence

Strategic Plan Category: 3001 - Support a well-trained workforce

DISCUSSION:

Department of Health and Human Services - Public Health has determined that the Division of Environmental Health (DEH), Consumer Protection (CP) program is in need of an additional Senior Environmental Health Specialist (EHS). The Consumer Protection Program, through State, Local, and Federal mandate, is responsible for providing the following services to Humboldt County and local cities:

Funded Mandates (Fee for Service, Beach Grant)

- Retail Food inspection and permitting
- Body Art Facility inspection and permitting
- Public Pool and Spa inspection and permitting
- Correctional Facility inspection
- Organized Camp inspection and oversight
- Beach Water Quality Sampling and Advisory Posting

Unfunded Mandates (Realignment)

- Harmful Algal Bloom Response and Advisory Posting
- Mussel Sampling and Shellfish Advisory Posting

- Wild/Domestic Animal Bite Investigation & Response (rabies)
- Vector investigation & surveillance (mosquitoes, birds & rodents)
- Foodborne Illness Investigation
- Administrative Tasks (Public Health Accreditation Board, Workforce Development, Training etc.)
- Complaint response; local Code Enforcement assistance

Of these listed services, the Retail Food program consists of more than 80% of the workload for actively permitted facilities and incoming applications/service requests (see Attachment). CP program staffing allocation consists of a Supervising EHS, one Senior EHS, and six inspectors (EHS I/II). Currently, two inspector positions are vacant.

The CP Program Senior EHS acts as the technical expert in all CP programs, and as such is responsible for inspector training, assignment of work, review of work, performance of highly technical inspections (e.g. correctional facilities), and program improvement in response to changing legislation and program needs. As the work is primarily office-based, the Senior EHS is largely responsible for responding to technical public inquiries made in-person at the reception counter and via urgent phone calls.

Current Challenges

Over the last five years, the CP program has lost four experienced inspectors as well as a supervisor with ten years of experience in the program. As a rural county, Humboldt has limited options for recruitment of Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS). As such, many recruits onboard at the REHS trainee level. After achieving state registration, staff frequently pursue the higher wages offered by other counties. Humboldt County acts as an ad hoc training academy and experiences frequent turn-over of staff. The perpetual onboarding of new staff creates consistent demands for training and oversight. Senior capacity is insufficient to provide necessary training, routine duties, and necessary program enhancements. Capacity challenges have resulted in the following impacts to the CP Program:

- Delays in completion of training required to release new inspectors to independent field work.
- Inability to meet programmatic goals for timely response and resolution of complaints.
- Delays in review of applications, inspections, and staff work products; and associated frustrations of applicants and operators.
- Lack of capacity to train staff in non-food-related tasks - staff lack sufficient training in Body Art and Pool/Spa inspections, rabies response, and vector investigation.
- Unmet program goals for completion of routine inspections.
- Limited capacity for program improvements.
- Lack of capacity to manage and implement FDA Standardized Training program and associated annual grant funding opportunities.
- Diminished morale and job satisfaction of the CP team and Senior EHS in the position.

In summary, the amount of Senior EHS level work in the Consumer Protection program exceeds the capacity of a single allocated Senior EHS position. Deallocating a staff level EHS I/II concurrent with creation of a new Senior EHS will diversify leadership within the program and increase capacity to train journey level staff to adequately meet programmatic expectations and increase capacity to make program policy improvements.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Public Health Fund (1175)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

<i>Expenditures (1175, 406)</i>	FY24-25 Projected*	FY25-26 Projected*
Budgeted Expenses	<u>\$17,053</u>	<u>\$17,565</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$17,053</u>	<u>\$17,565</u>

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

<i>Funding Sources (1175, 406)</i>	FY24-25 Projected*	FY25-26 Projected*
State/Federal Funds	<u>\$9,809</u>	<u>\$10,104</u>
Fees/Other	<u>\$7,244</u>	<u>\$7,461</u>

Total Funding Sources	<u>\$17,053</u>	<u>\$17,565</u>
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*Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

Funding for the Senior EHS would be provided by Environmental Health Fees and Public Health Realignment, fund 1175, budget unit 406 - Environmental Health Consumer Protections. In fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, salary savings from the vacant Environmental Health Specialist I/II would cover the increased cost of a Senior Environmental Health Specialist position. The future impact of this allocation would result in an approximate \$17,053 increase in FY 2025-26 and \$17,565 in FY 2026-27. The salary increases will be covered through Environmental Health fees, and Public Health Realignment funds and will be included in the annual budget cycles.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Position Title	Position Control Number	Hourly Salary Range (1A-E Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
<i>Senior Environmental Health Specialist</i>	406-0932-TBD	\$29.48 - \$37.83	1.0	
<i>Environmental Health Specialist I/II</i>	406-0391A/B-02	\$23.44 - \$35.28		(1.0)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:

Approval of the allocation of one FTE Senior Environmental Health Specialist, and deallocation of one FTE Environmental Health Specialist I/II will have no net impact on the total number of positions allocated.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to authorize the allocation of 1.0 FTE Senior Environmental Health Specialist and deallocation of 1.0 FTE Environmental Health Specialist I/II. This, however, is not recommended as capacity DEH is currently insufficient to provide minimum services required of the Consumer Protection Programs.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Position Allocation Cover Letter - Rationale for a Second Senior EHS in Consumer Protection

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A