



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 10/18/2022

File #: 22-1386

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Human Resources

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Authorize equity increases for the Eligibility Specialist Series (MSS)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Effective the first full pay period following Board approval, approve and authorize equity increases for the following classifications:
 - a. Eligibility Specialist Trainee (class #1731T) placement at salary range 355
 - b. Eligibility Specialist I (class #1731A) placement at salary range 375
 - c. Eligibility Specialist II (class #1731B) placement at salary range 395
 - d. Eligibility Specialist III (class #1731C) placement at salary range 415
 - e. Eligibility Supervisor (class #1729) placement at salary range 445
2. Effective following Board approval, authorize removal of the following inactive classifications from the Comprehensive Compensation Schedule and Classification Summary (Attachment 1):
 - a. Eligibility Worker I/II (class #1731A/ #1731B)
 - b. Eligibility Worker III (class #1731C)
 - c. Eligibility Supervisor (37.5 hour) (class #0729)
3. Approve the amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Humboldt and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1684 and adopt the Comprehensive Compensation Schedule and Classification Summary, effective Oct. 18, 2022 (Attachment 1).
4. Adopt Resolution No. _____ (Attachment 2)

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Social Services Fund 1160

DISCUSSION:

The Eligibility Specialist Series is a Merit System Services (MSS) classification family that includes the classifications of Eligibility Specialist Trainee, Eligibility Specialist I/II, Eligibility Specialist III, and Eligibility Supervisor. A new Trainee level was added to the classification family and adopted by

the County of Humboldt in 2019. Additionally, the State of California observed annual minimum wage increases from 2017 to 2022, which increased the minimum wage from \$10.50 per hour to the current minimum wage of \$15 per hour.

These factors, in addition to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic have created compaction for the Eligibility Specialist Series and have contributed to severe recruitment and retention challenges for the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). DHHS currently has 72 vacant positions out of 181 allocations in the Eligibility Specialist Series, with 65 of those vacancies residing at the Trainee, I, and II levels. This has created a 39.8% vacancy rate for the series and a 50% vacancy rate across the Trainee, I and II levels. This shortage of staff, if left unresolved, could lead to the closure of the Call Center facility, in addition to longer wait times and turnaround times for DHHS clients that rely on benefits such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh. Due to these critical recruitment and retention challenges, Municipal Resource Group (MRG) conducted an internal alignment review of the compensation for the Eligibility Specialist Series at the department's request.

At the recommendation of MRG, the County of Humboldt and AFSCME have agreed to equity increases for the following classifications:

- 11.5% increase to Eligibility Specialist Trainee with placement at salary range 355
- 12% increase to Eligibility Specialist I with placement at salary range 375
- 11.5% increase to Eligibility Specialist II with placement at salary range 395
- 12.5% increase to Eligibility Specialist III with placement at salary range 415
- 11% increase to Eligibility Supervisor with placement at salary range 445

If adopted, these equity increases would create 10% differentials between the Trainee, I, II, and III levels and 15% between the III and Supervisor levels. Additionally, these increases account for the next minimum wage increase to \$15.50 per hour that will take effect January 1, 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

DHHS has 181 allocations for positions in the Eligibility Specialist Series, which reside in Fund 1160, Budget Unit 511 - Social Services. The proposed equity increases have an estimated cost of \$1.4 million for Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023. The Social Services budget has sufficient appropriation to cover the additional expense and there is no impact to the General Fund.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

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

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Merit System Services (MSS)
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose not to approve these equity increases. This is not recommended, as the

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Eligibility Specialist Series is facing critical recruitment and retention levels that if unaddressed, could lead to the closure of the Call Center facility and hinder DHHS-Social Services' ability to meet the needs of the community.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 - Comprehensive Compensation Schedule effective 2022-10-18

Attachment 2 - Resolution No. _____

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: 22-12