



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 1/30/2024

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File #: 24-57

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Sheriff

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

SUBJECT:

Exception to Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Hiring Freeze for Humboldt County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) Critical Law Enforcement Positions

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve an exception to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 hiring freeze for the following HCSO positions/classes for the remainder of FY2023-24 for any positions that were budgeted in FY2023-24 regardless of the funding source:
  - a. Correctional Deputy I/II (Class 0424), Sr. Correctional Deputy (Class 0421), Correctional Supervisor (Class 0420)
  - b. Sheriff Deputy I/II (Class 0406), Sheriff Deputy Recruit (Class 0418), Sheriff's Investigator (Class 0423), Sheriff's Sergeant (Class 0414), Sheriff's Lieutenant (Class 0406)
  - c. Emergency Communications Dispatcher (Class 0128), Senior Emergency Communications Dispatcher (Class 0127)
  - d. Community Services Officer (Class 0415)
  - e. Deputy Coroner/Public Administrator (Class 0445)
  - f. Animal Shelter/Care Attendant I/II (Class 0440)

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Fund, Additional Request for General Fund Allocation (ARGFA), ARPA, Measure Z and/or Grants (1100-221, 1100-243, 1100-297)

DISCUSSION:

For the last four fiscal years, HCSO has had a gap in funding to fully staff its operations and has had to request ARGFA to avoid laying off essential staff, closing outstations, and/or programs. The gap in funding is primarily due to the rising costs of insurance, worker's compensation, other county internal service fund charges, and inflation of services and supplies costs. HCSO also utilized staff vacancy savings to help cover the rising costs since on-going general fund allocation increases were not

available.

In 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved substantial salary increases for all county staff. Departments were provided on-going general fund allocations to cover the increases, less a 10% cut to the salaries/benefits allocation. The logic was that on average departments had 10% salary savings that could be used to help fund the salary increases. However, for HCSO, the 10% salary savings had already been utilized to fund the above mentioned cost increases. The 10% cut to the salaries/benefits allocation was a direct cut to HCSO's operational budget and substantially increased its on-going budget gap.

For FY2023-24 HCSO was faced with an \$8.2M budget gap. In order to reduce its ARGFA request as much as possible, HCSO unfunded 28 vacant allocated positions. HCSO requested \$5.5M in ARGFA to avoid unfunding an additional 41 positions, closing the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program, and closing the Willow Creek Station. The Board of Supervisors did not approve 7 Deputy Sheriff I/II positions that were vacant at the time of the ARGFA request, so the total unfunded positions for FY2023-24 is 35 positions per the below chart.

Position	#	Budget Un
Sheriff's Public Information Specialist	1	1100-297
Community Services Officer	2	1100-297
Emergency Communications Dispatcher	1	1100-221
Deputy Sheriff I/II/Recruit	15	1100-221
Sheriff's Lieutenant	2	1100-221
Administrative Secretary	3	1100-243
Correctional Work Crew Leader	1	1100-243
Correctional Deputy I/II	7	1100-243
Senior Correctional Deputy	1	1100-243
Correctional Supervisor	1	1100-243
Correctional Lieutenant	1	1100-243
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	

HCSO has not identified any additional positions that can go unfilled without moving forward with closure of services. Absorbing the workload of the unfunded 35 positions listed above, plus current vacancies has pushed HCSO's workforce past maximum capacity. HCSO has been working diligently to fill its current vacancies and has on-going recruitments for Correctional Deputies, Deputy Sheriffs, and Emergency Communications Dispatchers. In order to avoid further delays in critical recruitment efforts, HCSO is requesting an exception to the county hiring freeze for the positions listed in the recommendations. This includes any current vacant or future vacant positions for these classifications that were funded in FY2023-24 with either its general fund allocation, ARGFA/ARPA allocation, Measure Z, and/or Grants.

Positions that become vacant and are necessary to fill that are not listed in the above recommendations will be brought before your board on a case-by-case basis.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact in FY2023-24 as the positions that HCSO is requesting a hiring freeze exception were all funded in this fiscal year. HCSO will be asking for ARGFA funding for all of these same positions in FY2024-25. HCSO has done all it can to absorb the workload of 35 unfunded positions. Any further reductions to staffing will result in closing outstations and programs. HCSO is continuously seeking opportunities to find additional grants to help cover operational or staffing expenses in order to reduce its ARGFA request for FY2024-25 as much as possible. HCSO has restricted operational expenditures to only services and supplies that are essential to operations. It has also utilized asset forfeiture funding for necessary equipment replacements to further reduce its draw on the general fund.

STAFFING IMPACT:

HCSO is not requesting any additional positions beyond what was funded in FY2023-24.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

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

Core Roles: Enforce laws and regulations to protect residents

New Initiatives: Invest in county employees

Strategic Plan: 4.4 - Attract and retain the best county employees

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

None

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could deny this request for an exception to the hiring freeze and require HCSO to come to the Board for approval to hire each new staff member. This is not recommended because it will delay the recruitment process and create more work for HCSO staff to prepare agenda items for every new hire.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: NA

Meeting of: 12/19/2023

File No.: 23-1444