



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Human Resources
Department No.: 064
For Agenda Of: 10/17/2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director
Maria Elena De Guevara, Human Resources Director ext.82817
Contact Info: Yvonne Torres, Assistant Human Resources Director ext.83075

SUBJECT: Revision to the New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form:

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a.) Approve the revised Countywide New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy (Attachment A) which increases the maximum amount from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for non-physician/health care practitioners; incorporates into the countywide policy the current incentive structure for physicians (maximum \$90,000) and health care practitioners (maximum \$50,000); increases the maximum amount from \$3,500 to \$10,000 for promoted employees; allows for a CPI adjustment every 5 years; and makes other minor language changes; and
- b.) Determine that the above actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), because they consist of government funding mechanisms and/or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The County of Santa Barbara is wanting to attract, promote and retain highly qualified candidates for critical and hard to fill positions, including but not limited to department heads, assistant department heads, emergency responders, nurses, doctors, engineers, deputy probation officers and other specialized technical/professional positions. “Critical, hard to fill” may be defined by, but not limited to, vacancy rates, lack of available candidates, high rates of turnover, and specialized level of expertise needed. Given the competition for staff, rising rents, housing shortage in many parts of the county, and general inflation, the County needs to act now to attract and retain top candidates for our jobs. This recommendation today seeks your Board’s approval to revise our existing Countywide New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy (Attachment A).

The policy adopted in 2000 was designed to assist the County in its efforts to fill positions by providing new hire recruiting incentives and reimbursements. The revision in 2018 added a promotional incentive for current County employees. If approved, the maximum new hire incentive amount will increase from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for non-physician/non-health care practitioners, which can be used for expenses related to relocation, temporary housing, rental/lease, education loans and cash incentives. This provides a flexible mechanism for attracting quality outside talent and retaining the qualified internal candidates that we already have.

This revision will also increase the current internal promotional incentive from \$3,500 to up to \$10,000, to incentivize existing employees to promote into difficult or hard to fill positions, or to offset increased pension contribution for employees promoting into leadership job classifications from non-leadership job classes, or for other business needs as approved by the County Executive Officer, the Human Resources Director or their designee.

In a previous action, your Board separately approved new hire incentives for Medical Doctors, Psychiatrists, Health Care Practitioners, Staff Physicians, Staff Physicians Supervising, and Assistant Department Leader – Attorney/Physicians in the Public Health Department (PHD) and Behavioral Wellness Department (BWELL). This revision will incorporate those new hire incentives which will continue to be determined based on the unique circumstances and merits of each candidate. PHD and BWELL have structured the payouts to be paid in three (3) equal payments over a two-year period to minimize the risk should the employee choose to leave the County prior to the two-year commitment stated in the New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy.

The revised policy also allows for an adjustment of the incentive amounts every five years based on CPI, if warranted.

Background:

The County’s New Hire and Promotional Incentive Policy was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on April 18, 2000, revised on February 13, 2007 and again on June 19, 2018. This Policy’s goal is to assist the County in attracting and retaining highly qualified candidates to critical and hard to fill positions. In recent years the County has experienced growing difficulty attracting the talent needed to fill critical County jobs, as well convincing employees to avail themselves of promotional opportunities.

Public Health and Behavioral Wellness have been experiencing significant difficulties recruiting new Staff Physicians, Psychiatrists, and Health Care Practitioners while simultaneously losing existing physicians and psychiatrists to other practices. This has made it difficult for the Departments to meet the demands of an increasing number of Medi-Cal patients and provide timely clinical care. The County's New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy allows Departments to offer incentives and reimbursements up to \$30,000, per candidate and provides for higher amounts with the approval of the County Executive Officer and the Board of Supervisors.

On November 10, 2015, August 23, 2016, March 13, 2018 and November 29, 2022, your Board approved the request from PHD and BWELL to allow for an increased hiring incentive for Medical Doctors, Staff Physicians, Psychiatrists, Staff Physicians Supervising, and Assistant Department Leader – Attorney/Physician. Because of the continued success of this incentive, the Human Resources Department is requesting to add the incentives for these positions specific to the PHD and BWELL to the revised Countywide New Hire and Promotional Incentive policy, effective August 22, 2023. These incentives will remain at the level previously authorized, which was up to \$90,000 per appointment for Psychiatrists, Medical Doctors, Staff Physicians, Staff Physicians, Supervising, and Assistant Department Leader – Attorney/Physician; and up to \$50,000 for Health Care Practitioners.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Narrative: There is no separate budget for these incentives. Departments will use their existing budgets for new hire and promotional incentives as funding allows, as they currently do.

Attachments:

- A. New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy (redline)
- B. New Hire and Promotional Incentives Policy (clean)
- C. New Hire and Promotional Incentives Worksheet (revised with updates)

Authored by: Yvonne Torres, Assistant HR Director

cc: County Counsel
Auditor Controller