

ATTACHMENT B

SIDE LETTER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA AND THE

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, LOCAL 721

**Side Letter Agreement between the
County of Santa Barbara and the
Service Employees International Union, Local 721
December 16, 2025**

This Side Letter of Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by and between the County of Santa Barbara ("County") and the Service Employees International Union, Local 721 ("Union") (collectively, the "Parties") with respect to the following:

WHEREAS, the Union is a recognized employee organization within the meaning of the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Union are parties to a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") covering the period August 5, 2024, through July 4, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Social Services ("Department" or "DSS") is facing a significant projected General Fund budget shortfall for the period January through June 2026; and

WHEREAS, the County and the Union have met and conferred in good faith with the shared intent of identifying temporary labor cost savings measures ("concessions") to assist in closing the budget gap and avoiding the elimination of filled, funded positions within DSS during Fiscal Year 2025–2026;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:

I. TEMPORARY MERIT ELIGIBILITY DELAY

A temporary six (6)-month delay in merit eligibility shall apply to all employees working within the Department of Social Services in the following employee groups:

- SEIU Local 620: Bargaining Units 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27
- SEIU Local 721: Bargaining Units 21 and 22
- Confidential, Management, and Executive Employees: Units 32, 35, 41, 42, and 43 (covered under Resolution 24-187)

Application of the temporary merit eligibility delay to employees represented by SEIU Local 620 shall be subject to ratification by SEIU Local 620's membership and approval by the County Board of Supervisors.

Application of this Agreement to employees represented by SEIU Local 721 shall not be contingent upon SEIU Local 620's ratification of a corresponding agreement. In the event SEIU Local 721 ratifies this Agreement and it is subsequently approved by the County Board of Supervisors, the provisions herein shall remain fully effective and enforceable for SEIU Local

721–represented employees and shall also apply to Confidential, Management, and Executive employees, regardless of whether SEIU Local 620 ratifies a similar agreement.

Employees covered under this Agreement with merit eligibility dates occurring during calendar year 2026 (January 1 – December 31, 2026) shall have their merit eligibility delayed by six (6) months. This temporary delay shall not affect future merit eligibility cycles or anniversary dates beyond the applicable six (6)-month deferral.

This provision shall have no impact on general salary increases, inequities, or flex/promotional advancements provided under existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or County policy. There shall be no “catch up” or retroactive payment to employees for the period of the merit delay.

II. DURATION

The cost savings resulting from these temporary concessions will be realized through calendar year 2026 but will be considered as applied to avoiding the elimination of filled, funded SEIU Local 721–represented positions in DSS during the period January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026, unless otherwise specified.

The temporary merit eligibility delay provisions shall automatically sunset on January 1, 2027, unless extended by mutual agreement and formal ratification. This means the delay applies only to merit dates occurring during calendar year 2026. Merit eligibility delays already in effect as of the sunset date shall remain in place until the full six (6)-month delay period is completed.

Example: An employee whose merit eligibility date is December 1, 2026, will have their merit eligibility delayed until June 1, 2027.

III. LABOR/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON THE FY 2026–2027 BUDGET

To support long-term financial stability and continued collaboration between labor and management, the Parties agree to establish a joint committee to monitor and discuss the Department’s Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget.

1. Establishment and Meetings:

The committee shall convene beginning in January 2026 and meet monthly through June 30, 2026.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of the committee is to evaluate and discuss potential measures to:

- Avoid, limit, or reduce the impact of further layoffs in Fiscal Year 2026–2027;
- Protect the Department’s ability to provide essential services; and
- Preserve filled, funded positions to the greatest extent possible.

This provision shall automatically sunset June 30, 2026, unless extended by mutual agreement and formal ratification by the Parties.

IV. NON-PRECEDENT CLAUSE

This Agreement is entered into solely in response to the unique and temporary fiscal circumstances affecting the Department of Social Services for Fiscal Year 2025–2026. Nothing in this Agreement shall establish a precedent or practice for any other department, bargaining unit, or future negotiations between the Parties.

V. EXECUTION

This Agreement shall become effective upon ratification by the SEIU Local 721 membership and approval by the County Board of Supervisors.

Service Employees International Union,
Local 721

County of Santa Barbara

Carson Acosta
Regional Director

Carlos Silvas
Employee Relations Division Chief

Date

Date