



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: 11/7/2023
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: Carlos Silvas, Employee Relations Division Chief ext.83075
SUBJECT: Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program

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 resolution requiring the inclusion of a new hire incentive of \$30,000 in advertising efforts made to fill all Custody Deputy vacancies, and all job offers made to candidates eligible to fill Custody Deputy vacancies (Attachment A).
- b.) Approve the use of General County Programs Proposition 172 set-aside fund balance as needed to fund the Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program, in accordance with the FY 2023-24 Budget Development Policy approved by the Board on October 18, 2022. Corresponding budget revisions will be subsequently brought to the Board for approval as funds are needed to support the program.
- c.) 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

The County of Santa Barbara has critical need to attract and retain qualified candidates to fill Custody Deputy vacancies in the Sheriff's Office. Of 247 funded Custody Deputy positions, the Sheriff's Office currently has 32 vacancies and 13 on leave of absence; a vacancy rate of 18%. This is a net increase of 22 vacancies since 2020, when the Department had a vacancy rate of 8% (249 positions, 8 vacancies, and 11 leave of absences). The Department's ability to hire Custody Deputies at a rate commensurate with or greater than annual attrition declined significantly in 2021 and 2022. And while the Department is making strides thus far in 2023 in hiring at a rate commensurate with separations, further meaningful actions are needed to bolster and support the Department's hiring and retention efforts in order to close the Custody Deputy vacancy gap. The inclusion of a new hire incentive program structured to attract and retain staff is one such action. (Attachment A).

The proposed Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program requires the inclusion of a new hire incentive of \$30,000 in advertising efforts made to fill all Custody Deputy vacancies, and all job offers made to candidates eligible to fill Custody Deputy vacancies. These new hire incentives will be tiered as follows so as to attract and retain qualified candidates:

1. Candidates having no previous experience and who are not Adult Corrections Officer Core certified in accordance with the CA Board of State and Community Corrections will receive \$5,000 upon hire as a Custody Deputy, \$5,000 upon completion of one full year (12 months) and successful completion of their County probationary period as a Custody Deputy, \$10,000 upon completion of two full years (24 months) as a Custody Deputy, and \$10,000 upon completion of three full years (36 months) as a Custody Deputy.
2. Candidates having previous, contemporary experience, and who are not Adult Corrections Officer Core certified in accordance with the CA Board of State and Community Corrections will receive \$20,000 upon hire as a Custody Deputy, and \$10,000 upon completion of one full year (12 months) and successful completion of their County probationary period.
3. Candidates having previous, contemporary experience, and who are Adult Corrections Officer Core certified in accordance with the CA Board of State and Community Corrections will receive \$30,000 upon hire as a Custody Deputy.

To be eligible for the new hire incentive, candidates must be new to the position of Custody Deputy with the County of Santa Barbara, or not previously employed as such within the last three years. Candidates who separate from regular County of Santa Barbara service prior to the completion of three full years (36 months) of County employment shall be required to repay the County for the new hire incentive paid to them. Such payment shall be prorated based on the new employee's months of completed service. Candidates who fail probation, or are unable to pass the academy will not be subject to repayment provisions.

Background:

Of 247 funded positions, the Sheriff's Office currently has 32 Custody Deputy vacancies and 13 on leave of absence; a vacancy rate of 18%. At this same time in 2020 the Sheriff's Office had 8 Custody Deputy vacancies and 11 on leave of absence (249 funded positions); a vacancy rate of 8%. The Department's ability to hire Custody Deputies at a rate commensurate with or greater than annual attrition declined significantly in 2021 and 2022 (28 separations to 17 new hires, and 30 separations to 18 new hires, respectively). As a result, the Custody Deputy vacancy rate grew in 2021 and 2022, and now sits at 18% in 2023; a net increase of 22 Custody Deputy vacancies. And while it appears the Department is making

strides in 2023 (29 Custody Deputies hire and 26 separations; a net increase of 3 Custody Deputies), further meaningful actions are needed to attract and retain qualified candidates, and close the Custody Deputy vacancy gap sooner than later.

The County has had a countywide New Hire Incentive Policy in place since April 2000, which was most recently revised in October 2023. That general policy has been effective in attracting qualified candidates for critical and hard to fill positions countywide. This includes, but is not limited to physicians, health care professionals, attorneys, and department leadership positions. Amounts and application of incentives under this policy are discretionary up to a Board-approved cap.

The Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program will not be discretionary and will require the inclusion of a specified, consistent incentive (\$30,000) in advertising efforts made to fill all Custody Deputy vacancies, and all job offers made to candidates eligible to fill Custody Deputy vacancies. The incentives will also be tiered in a specified manner aimed at not only attracting qualified candidates to apply, but also to retain those candidates after hire. The Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program is anticipated to last for two years, but may be discontinued at any time when deemed no longer necessary by the County Executive Officer and County Human Resources Director.

The County reached out to other California county partners seeking input for any that may have, or are currently utilizing hiring incentives for custody deputies. Those that responded report having seen significant increases in custody deputy hires since implementing hiring incentives.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Narrative: The cost of Custody Deputy new hire incentives will be \$30,000 per new hire. Assuming 25 Custody Deputy new hires per year, it is estimated this program will cost \$750,000 per year for the two years the program is anticipated to be necessary.

On October 18, 2022, the Board approved a \$2 million Prop 172 set-aside to be released each year upon review and recommendation of the County Executive Office and approval by the Board of Supervisors to mitigate overtime usage and for the reimbursement for the New Hire Incentive Program or other recruitment efforts pre-authorized by the County Executive Office. Accordingly, it is requested that the Board approve the use of the \$2 million set-aside as needed to fund this program. The County Executive Office will bring corresponding budget revisions to the Board for approval at subsequent board meetings as the funding is needed.

Attachments:

- A. Resolution of the Board of Supervisors, County of Santa Barbara – Custody Deputy New Hire Incentive Program

Authored by: Carlos Silvas, Employee Relations Division Chief

cc: County Counsel
Auditor-Controller