



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:** February 14, 2023  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimated Time:** 15 Minutes  
**Continued Item:** Select\_Continued  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department Maria Elena De Guevara, Human Resources Director, 568-2817  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Yvonne Torres, Assistant Human Resources Director, 568-3075

**SUBJECT:** Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program Policy

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form:

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form:

**Recommended Actions:** That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approves the Policy in Attachment A for a Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program Policy to be effective as soon as practical; and
- B. Determine pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) that the above action is a government fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and therefore is not a project subject to environmental review

**Summary Text:**

The recommended action would establish an employee referral program to enhance recruitment efforts to attract and retain qualified candidates for vacant positions in County job classifications that are designated by the Human Resources Director as difficult-to-fill. If the policy is approved, most regular County employees who refer a candidate who is ultimately hired into a difficult-to-fill position would be eligible for a referral bonus of \$1,200, subject to the terms of the policy in Attachment A. At this time the only position that has been designated as difficult-to-fill per the recommended policy is Custody Deputy in the Sheriff's Office. Labor organizations representing County employees were notified about the proposed policy, and the County has met its obligation to meet and confer prior to putting this on today's agenda.

**Background:**

Law enforcement agencies across the nation, including many in California, have been plagued by an inability to hire staff to fill vacant positions. Here in Santa Barbara County, the Sheriff's Office has had considerable difficulty filling vacant Custody Deputy positions, and one potential avenue to encourage more applicants to apply is to establish an employee referral program.

The recommended actions would establish a program subject to the policy in Attachment A, under which most regular County employees in a paid status or on an approved leave of absence would be eligible to receive a referral bonus of \$1,200: \$400 paid when an eligible referred employee begins County employment, with the balance of \$800 paid after the new hire has successfully completed a probationary period or 12 months of employment should any at-will classifications be designated as difficult- to-fill in the future.

Although at this time the only position that has been designated as difficult-to-fill per the recommended policy is Custody Deputy in the Sheriff's Office, if the policy is approved by the Board and the program proves successful, it could be used in cases of other job classifications that are designated as difficult-to-fill by the Human Resources Director.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: No

**Fiscal Analysis:**

The total annual cost of the recommended action would depend on the number of referrals in any given year. Although no funds have been specifically budgeted for a Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program, hiring departments would be responsible for funding any referral bonuses, with salary savings from vacant positions envisioned as the source of funds.

**Attachments: Attachment A:** Difficult-To-Fill Position Employee Referral Program Policy

**Authored by:** Joseph M. Pisano

**cc:** Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Rachel Van Mullem, County Counsel  
Betsy Schaffer, Auditor-Controller  
Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner