

County of Santa Clara
Employee Services Agency
Recruiting & Examining



CSFC01 021506


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DATE: February 15, 2006

TO: Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr., Chairperson
Supervisor Don Gage, Vice-Chairperson
Children, Seniors & Families Committee

FROM: 
Luke Leung
Deputy County Executive

SUBJECT: Status Report on Expanding the Unclassified Program for Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Accept status report which provides more in depth analysis relating to the possible expansion of the Unclassified Program for Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) to include additional

County Agencies and Departments.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no costs associated with the acceptance of this report. The expansion of Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) Program will not require any new positions to be added, but will require alternately staffing existing classified positions with unclassified positions. The costs for such positions are already included in the respective Departments' FY 2006 budget.

CONTRACT HISTORY

Not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

At the December 6, 2005, Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board directed Social Services Agency (SSA) in collaboration with Employee Services Agency (ESA), to prepare a report to expand the Unclassified Program for Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY). Expansion of this Program beyond the Social Services Agency would allow the hiring of foster care youth in a variety of entry level positions Countywide. Currently, the EFY participants are limited to Office Specialist II and Office Specialist III codes in SSA under Salary Ordinance Footnote #57. This Footnote also limits to forty the number of codes in the unclassified status.

After consultation with SSA, ESA recommends using Salary Ordinance Footnote #126 for the expansion of the EFY Program. This Footnote is attached to a variety of entry-level positions Countywide. It was originally established for the Employment Support Initiative. This Program gives opportunities for untrained, economically disadvantaged individuals to transition from welfare to work. The advantage of using this Footnote is that it expands the Program to many more suitable, entry-level positions and is found Countywide. There are also no limitations to the number of codes that can be filled in the unclassified status.

BACKGROUND

ESA is partnering with SSA to expand the current EFY program. Currently, EFY participants are limited to Office Specialist II and Office Specialist III positions in Social Services Agency. ESA is recommending that the following entry-level classifications located throughout the County be considered for use in the EFY program. This change will allow EFY

participants to have additional employment opportunities by having a variety of entry level positions available.

Account Clerk I
Office Specialist I and II
Custody Support Assistant
Food Service Worker I
Food Service Worker I – Correction
Janitor
Library Clerk
Messenger Driver
Paralegal
Clerk–Recorder Office Specialist I

ESA has developed strategies to market the EFY program to County Departments. We will be creating increased visibility by having program information on the County's Internet Website. In addition, we will be providing information to departments describing the EFY program and the benefits it provides, including the opportunity for departments to select from a broader pool of applicants when filling vacancies. In addition, under the current freeze policy, no freeze exemptions are required for unclassified position so hiring can be expedited by using this program to fill vacant codes.

Other strategies that ESA is developing include: a program brochure; an interest survey for the EFY participants; and a training program to assist the youth in completing employment applications and succeeding in the hiring interview.

EFY participants will submit employment applications to the SSA Employment Counselor for a preliminary review to ensure that they meet the EFY program requirements. ESA will then review the participants applications for employment standards and minimum qualifications of the specific classifications. ESA will provide up to three EFY participants to hiring managers for consideration. Departments will not be required to hire the participants but are encouraged to interview them and consider them for their vacancies.

ESA recommends that the EFY program be modeled after the Employment Support Initiative Program. The participant must take and pass the appropriate examination in order to be transitioned to classified status. The maximum time a participant has to pass the exam is nine months. Those not passing the examination will be released from County service.

All applicants for the program will be tracked in a database maintained by SSA. SSA and ESA will continue to monitor the program to ensure that it is functioning effectively and the youth get the proper support they need to succeed. SSA is exploring whether there are grant moneys available to subsidize the positions that are filled with EFY participants. This would most certainly increase the likelihood of departments hiring the EFY participants.

In addition, ESA is working with the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) to hire as many as fifty foster care youth from February through June 2006. DCSS has available funding that must be spent on Child Support Services Programs by June 30, 2006 and has approached ESA about the hiring of emancipated foster youth in Child Support related functions. This will allow these youth to gain valuable work experience with the County in entry level extra help jobs. SSA is currently working on contacting eligible participants and inviting them to apply for these temporary assignments.

Employee Services Agency has advised SEIU Local 715 of the Board's direction related to emancipated foster youth employment and will continue to work with Local 715 on the actual implementation of the EFY Program. After review by the Committee and with its approval, ESA will present a salary ordinance amendment to the Board for final approval and implementation.