



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: September 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Add 0.2 regular FTE to Health Services for Language Access work

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move approval to add 0.2 regular FTE position within the Health Services Fund.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

On December 14, 2022, the Board of County Commissioners approved acceptance of a one-time PacificSource Behavioral Health (BH) Workforce Diversity grant in the amount of \$147,595.40. The goal of this funding is to diversify the workforce so that PacificSource members have increased access to BH providers who are more reflective of the cultures and languages of PacificSource members. Funding from this grant is for the period December 2022 through December 2023. PacificSource has indicated they are willing to extend the term of the funding.

In Oregon, PacificSource members who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) or speak languages other than English engage in BH services at lower rates compared to white and English-speaking members, even amongst members diagnosed with a BH condition. Increasing access to a diverse workforce, that reflects member race/ethnic, cultural background and language needs, is an evidence-based strategy known to reduce health disparities and is a key workforce development priority for PacificSource. Additionally, current quality incentive metrics (QIMs) for Central Oregon include a required metric related to improving language access for members, which has increased demand for language services within Health Services.

Health Services is seeking approval to add a 0.2 regular FTE Administrative Support Technician, effective September 1, 2023 to serve as a Language Access Liaison, to a regular 0.8 FTE Administrative Support Technician position (#2260). The position will provide translation and in-person interpreting, coordinating interpreting and translation services provided through vendors, and advocating for health equity and linguistically appropriate and culturally competent service provisions. This work has been partially performed by a qualified employee who is now in a 0.8 regular FTE Health Services position in Public Health. That 0.8 will remain dedicated to the Public Health program, and we are requesting

increasing the position to 1.0 FTE, with the additional 0.2 FTE of the position to serve as a Language Access Liaison. PacificSource funding will cover the position through June 30, 2024. Beginning in fiscal year 2025, the position will be funded through departmental indirect charges, and as such, Health Services is recommending that this position be regular instead of limited duration. However, should funding no longer support the increase in the position, DCHS will consider the future of this position within the budgeting process.

BUDGET IMPACTS:

The estimated cost of a 0.2 Administrative Support Technician for 10 months is \$15,145. If approved, an FTE resolution will be forthcoming from Finance. No additional appropriation will be necessary in the Health Services Fund.

ATTENDANCE:

Jillian Weiser, HS Compliance QA Officer

Cheryl Smallman, HS Business Officer