



24-5268-01

**DATE:** May 7, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** James R. Williams, County Executive

**SUBJECT:** Salary Ordinance Amendment for Social Services Agency (SSA) Social Worker II/III Sign-On Bonus

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Adopt Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24.70, an Ordinance amending Santa Clara County Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24 relating to compensation of employees adding a sign-on bonus for Social Worker III and Social Worker II positions in the Social Services Agency.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

Approval of the Recommended Action would have no new impact to the General Fund. The savings within the Agency's approved budget from vacant Social Worker II and Social Worker III positions will cover the potential costs associated with the sign-on bonus of up to \$5,000 per qualified employee. As of March 17, 2024, the Social Services Agency had 76 vacant Social Worker II and Social Worker III positions.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND**

Social Services Agency (SSA) and Employee Services Agency – Human Resources (ESA-HR) have been meeting bi-monthly as part of ESA-HR's continuing efforts to enhance the level of service and support provided to County departments with acute personnel-related needs and challenges. In these meetings, SSA identified some classifications for which the agency is experiencing recruitment difficulties. In partnership with SSA, ESA-HR is exploring creative recruitment strategies for these classifications.

To incentivize social workers to join the County of Santa Clara, it is recommended to create a sign-on bonus for new hires into the Social Worker II and Social Worker III classifications. The proposed language of the sign-on bonus is modeled after the successful sign-on bonus already established for certain classifications in Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (Master Salary Ordinance, Section 54: Special Compensation, I.).

It is recommended to include the new language in the same section; the proposed language is:

## O. Sign-on Bonus Program (Social Worker II/ Social Worker III)

On an ongoing basis and subject to discontinuation at any time, a new hire into a position with the Social Services Agency in the classification of Social Worker II or Social Worker III, assigned to any shift, may be eligible to receive a sign-on bonus of up to \$5,000, upon approval of the Human Resources Director or designee. Qualified employees are expected to sign an agreement prior to receiving the monies that they will be employed in the specific classification for at least two years. If the individual vacates the position prior to that time, they will agree to repay the County on a pro-rated basis.

To provide the sign-on bonus, hiring managers should include the terms in the offer letter to the prospective employee, submit the completed request to ESA-HR for review and approval, and then send the applicable documents to Payroll for processing. The Social Services Agency would track all sign-on bonus agreements. Samples, forms, and checklists are being developed and will be provided for hiring managers to utilize in the onboarding process.

SEIU, Local 521 concurs with the recommended action.

### **CHILD IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

### **SENIOR IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The County would not have the opportunity to provide a sign on bonus to Social Workers, which would serve as a tool to address SSA's acute recruitment and retention challenges.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors is requested to send OneMeeting notifications of completed processing to Julia Guillen, Staci Bjerk, Jennifer Paredes-Fricano, and Zullay Rodriguez, Employee Services Agency, Human Resources Department.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- NS 5 24 70 ESA Social Worker III or II Sign On Bonus
- Social Worker II III Sign On Bonus Class Report 06 02 23