

15. Under advisement from October 3, 2023 (Item No. 11): Consider recommendations relating to adding three positions in the Office of Veterans Services, Social Services Agency. Possible action:
- a. Approve Request for Appropriation Modification No. 145 - \$77,273 transferring funds from the General Fund Contingency Reserve to the Social Services Agency budget, relating to adding three alternately staffed Veterans Services Representatives II/I. (4/5 Vote)
 - b. Introduce and preliminarily adopt Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24.54, an Ordinance amending Santa Clara County Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24 relating to compensation of employees adding three Veterans Services Representative II or Veterans Services Representative I positions in the Social Services Agency.

(ID# 24-4219)

ORDINANCE NO. NS-5.24.54

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SANTA CLARA COUNTY ORDINANCE
NO. NS-5.24 RELATING TO THE COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara ordains as follows:

SECTION 1:

In SECTION 44 – SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY – BU 501 the following shall be added:

3	X71	Veteran Services Representative II	
	OR	X72	Veteran Services Representative I

SECTION 2:

This Ordinance shall take effect February 27, 2024. This Ordinance shall be implemented on March 4, 2024.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, on _____ by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Susan Ellenberg, President
Board of Supervisors

Signed and Certified that a copy of this document has been delivered by electronic or other means to the President, Board of Supervisors.

Attest:

Curtis Boone
Acting Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

County Of Santa Clara
Request For Appropriation Modification
Fiscal Year = 2024

F - 85 # **145**

Approved: 02/06/2024

Line	Fund	Budget Unit	Cost Center	CI	Description	Job Code	Funded Program	CMB Revenues	CMB Expenditures
1	0001	0501	4721	4510150	Federal - Medical Assistance Program			36,364.00	
2	0001	0501	4815	5101000	Permanent Employees	X71			70,347.00
3	0001	0501	4815	5110100	Retiree Medical Insurance	X71			4,974.00
4	0001	0501	4815	5110200	Health Insurance	X71			15,753.00
5	0001	0501	4815	5110300	Unemployment Insurance	X71			30.00
6	0001	0501	4815	5110400	FICA - Employer Share	X71			4,362.00
7	0001	0501	4815	5110500	Medicare Tax - Employer Share	X71			1,020.00
8	0001	0501	4815	5110602	PERS-Employer Paid Employer Contribution	X71			7,092.00
9	0001	0501	4815	5110603	PERS-Unfunded Accrued Liability-Misc	X71			8,646.00
10	0001	0501	4815	5110610	Pension Obligation Bond-PERS UAL-Misc	X71			654.00
11	0001	0501	4815	5110700	Workers' Compensation	X71			744.00
12	0001	0501	4815	5111200	Deferred Comp Expense -ER	X71			15.00
13	0001	0910	1010	5701000	Reserves				(77,273.00)
0001					Transfer (From) To Fund Balance:			0.00	
					Grand Total:			36,364.00	36,364.00

Form ID# Included:

38413, 38937,



United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County

P.O. Box 26517
San Jose, California 95159-6517
www.uvcsc.org

Honoring Those Who Served

February 2, 2024

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors

RE: Office of Veterans Services, Social Services Agency
Staff Additions and reclassification of one Program Manager II to Program Manager III
Agenda Items #15 and #41

Honorable Board of Supervisors:

The United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County is aware of the request for an additional 3 Veteran Service Officers and the reclassification of one Program Manager II to Program Manager III. The council strongly recommends and supports this additional staffing and reclassification of personnel. The Veteran Service Office is and continues to be an integral part of the Veteran Community in Santa Clara County and supports the needs of veterans and their families.

We applaud the past efforts of the Board of Supervisors in providing shelter, aid and comfort to the veterans in Santa Clara County and see this as a natural extension of all of the efforts and activities that have been provided. Each veteran and their families represent a strong link in our community and their continued contributions add to this overall strength of our community.

The Council recognizes the need for the County to maintain strong fiduciary controls and would like to note that in a recent state report Veteran benefit received \$44 for every \$1 of general funds spent. The addition of this staff and promotion of the Manager provides benefit to the County as well as the Veteran and in conjunction with the overall fiscal responsibilities of the County.

Respectfully submitted,

United Veterans Council of Santa Clara County
Board of Directors
Council Delegates and their supporting Veteran agencies

Support Our Veterans

A non-profit IRS 501(c)19 Corporation (EIN #77-0044329)
Pay Pal Donations – uvcsantaclearacounty@gmail.com

From: [Cole Cameron](#)
To: [BoardOperations](#); acolecam@gmail.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for VSO additional headcount, Agenda item #15 b and 41. They obtained \$15 M in service benefits for our Veterans with a budget of only \$2.6 M, a ~6x RIO
Date: Friday, February 2, 2024 1:14:46 PM

As a Veteran I served and have received good support from our VSO team, having them nationally certified as Veteran Service Representatives (VSRs) Counselors. We are blessed to have Darlyn Escalante who has been elevated to our Director, after going thru the gruelling nationally certification program and then training while managing her team.

Our relatively small team of only 10 VSRs supports over ~60,000 Veterans in our area, and their families, which makes that ~120,000! As stated in the subject line, they bring in to the county \$15 million with a budget of only \$2.6 million, a 6x return on investment. The funds the Veterans received are then respent in our county. During their Walk-in-Tuesdays, they have had as many as 170 appointments to deal with. The average caseload is 350-400 per VSR. They have been going to the South County 2x/month, expanding hours to between 8 and 2 pm.

The added 3 VSRs will spread the case load from their existing small team, and allow for even more support for VSR case management and Outreach into the community in our South County that has ~5,000 Veterans. Their teams have done outreach into the encampments in various parts of the county to connect with the un-housed Veteran population.

As an ol corporate finance guy, it makes it easier to support them because compared to their operating budget, the amount of Veteran benefit money they acquire for our Veterans that is then returned and spent in our community is beneficial in so many ways. In the recent state report Veteran benefits received \$44 for every \$1 of general funds spent!.

I look forward to your agreement to approve these additions so more benefits can be obtained in a faster manner while providing a more reasonable VSR case load.

Thank you for you for your support, cole

A. Cole Cameron

Veteran, US Army, 1st Lt, Viet era
Chair, SCC Veterans Commission

CERT BOD, Council, Instructor where we support individual preparedness in neighborhoods
BOD, where we support our NGOs for their disaster preparedness

From: [Raymond Watts](#)
To: [BoardOperations](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] County Board Meeting 2/6 Agenda Item #15 (LF#24-4219).
Date: Monday, February 5, 2024 9:54:12 PM

Madam President and County Board Supervisors request your unanimous approval of Item #15 3 VSR I/II positions within the Santa Clara County Veteran Service Office [VSO].

The VSO is a small highly efficient team of 16 staff members (when fully staffed), including 10 state and nationally accredited Veterans Services Representatives [VSRs]. Their dedication extends to serving all 65,000+ veterans in Santa Clara County, along with their dependents, which likely doubles this number. It's important to add that they extend assistance to veterans from any part of the US. The impact of their assistance on veterans and families has been profound and life changing. Benefits provided include disability compensation, non-service-connected pensions, education, burial assistance, dependency indemnity compensation, VA health care applications, and more

Here are a couple of compelling examples: *1/An unhoused veteran received over \$300k in retroactive payments for his claim with our assistance, has achieved stability, and is now actively contributing by using his earned compensation to support other veterans in need. 2/A surviving spouse, initially lost in the appeals process following her veteran husband's passing, sought our help in desperation. With our assistance, she successfully navigated the appeal, securing over \$100,000 in retroactive payments and monthly survivors' compensation. They have hundreds of these stories that are waiting to be told.*

VSO also significantly contributes to the local economy, accounting for over \$15 million in new federal veteran benefits brought back into the county in 2023. Adding the three VSRs is a good business investment for the county.

Since the implementation of the PACT Act on August 10, 2022, the VSO caseload has surged to ~350-400 per VSR. Furthermore, outreach efforts have increased 260% in 2023 (108) compared to 2022 (50).

The urgent need for three additional VSRs is evident as they strive to alleviate the higher caseload per VSR and extend outreach efforts for providing essential services to veterans and their families. Thus, offsetting the contributing factor for office attrition and burn-out of existing team members resulting from significant caseloads.

VSO also has supported numerous veteran's county events such as Memorial Day, Veteran's day and most recently the Santa Clara County Veteran Stand down at the fairgrounds where over 2K veterans had access to critical services from VA PA, Housing, Employment, Medical Care, Legal Advice and others. The team has been instrumental in arranging the mobile dental clinic to provide much need basic dental services to Veterans. The same mobile service this board overwhelming approved to fund before the FY23 holiday break.

Most impactful is the outreach to unhoused, food insecure and high risk veterans residing in local encampments. This outreach aligns with the Governors support of Prop1 for the unhoused Veterans statewide. Let's proactive address the issue by the addition of three dedicated, highly efficient and caring VSRs to the VSO team.

Respectfully,

Ray Watts COL (R) USA

President

Military Officers Assn of America [MOAA - Silicon Valley]

408-728-6510 (Office)

REQUEST TO SPEAK FORM

This document is a public record, subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.
This document may also be added to the meeting materials posted on the County website.

If you wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission, please fill out this form and place it in the container provided.

DATE: 2/6/24

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15

For Issue ☐

Against Issue ☐

Neutral ☐

* Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL): DAN FURTADO Decline to State ☐

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL): _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): _____

PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

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DATE: 2/6/24

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15

For Issue ☒ Against Issue ☐ Neutral ☐

* Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL): Cole Cameron Decline to State ☐

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL): Veterans

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): _____

PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

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DATE: 2-6-24

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15

For Issue ☒ Against Issue ☐ Neutral ☐ * Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL): Mike Hennessy Decline to State ☐
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL): VETS
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): 735 Harrison St Santa Clara 95050
PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

Supporting Veterans!!

REQUEST TO SPEAK FORM

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DATE: 6 Feb 2024

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15

For Issue ☒ Against Issue ☐ Neutral ☐ * Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL): Major General Kent Hillhouse Decline to State ☐

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL): LC Vets Memorial Foundation

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): _____

PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

REQUEST TO SPEAK FORM

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DATE: 2/6/24

AGENDA ITEM NO. 17

For Issue ☐ Against Issue ☐ Neutral ☐ * Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL): John Sweeney Decline to State ☐

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL): SCCOE

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): _____

PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

A Written Only

REQUEST TO SPEAK FORM

This document is a public record, subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.
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If you wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission, please fill out this form and place it in the container provided.

DATE: 2/6/24

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15A ~~15B~~ ~~15C~~ ~~15D~~

For Issue ☒

Against Issue ☐

Neutral ☐

* Written comments for the record only ☐

NAME (OPTIONAL):

GERALD ARNOLD

Decline to State ☐

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ORGANIZATION (OPTIONAL):

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

ADDRESS (OPTIONAL):

PLEASE PRINT

*If you want to provide written comments for the record only, and you do NOT wish to address the Board, Committee, or Commission orally, please write comments below:

SUPPORT 3 NEW VSO OFFICE &
FOR 1 ADDED VEHICLE TO
HELP VSO OFFICE STAFF
TO TRAVEL TO VETERANS.



24-4219

DATE: February 6, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Daniel Little, Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Appropriation Modification and Salary Ordinance to add three VSR positions in VSO

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Under advisement from October 3, 2023 (Item No. 11): Consider recommendations relating to adding three positions in the Office of Veterans Services, Social Services Agency.

Possible action:

- a. Approve Request for Appropriation Modification No. 145 - \$77,273 transferring funds from the General Fund Contingency Reserve to the Social Services Agency budget, relating to adding three alternately staffed Veterans Services Representatives II/I. (4/5 Vote)
- b. Introduce and preliminarily adopt Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24.54, an Ordinance amending Santa Clara County Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24 relating to compensation of employees adding three Veterans Services Representative II or Veterans Services Representative I positions in the Social Services Agency.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

For the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024, the cost of the three alternately staffed Veterans Services Representatives (VSR) I/II positions to be added is \$113,637, with \$36,364 in federal revenue and \$77,273 in net County cost, which will be funded by General Fund Contingency Reserve.

In FY 2024-2025, the cost of the three alternately staffed VSR I/II positions to be added is \$494,316 with \$158,181 in federal revenue and \$336,135 in net County cost, which will be funded by General Fund Contingency Reserve.

The Adopted Budget for the FY 2023-2024 General Fund Contingency Reserve is \$218,587,995. The balance of this reserve as of February 6, 2024, is \$208,875,262 indicating that a net of \$9,712,733 has been allocated for other purposes. There may be additional pending actions that will impact this balance once they are approved and processed. Board policy 4.3 states that the contingency reserve should be 5% of general revenues net of pass-

Approved: 02/06/2024

through revenue. Since the use of contingency reserve impacts compliance with this policy, the midyear budget analysis may include a recommended action to replenish this reserve.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND

At the October 3, 2023, Board of Supervisors meeting (Item No. 11), Supervisors Simitian and Lee requested that Administration report to the Board at the FY 2023-2024 Mid-Year Budget Review to add two alternately staffed VSR I/II and one alternately staffed VSR II/III to the Veterans Services Office (VSO).

As the VSR III job code does not exist, three VSR II/I positions are being requested to support VSO's staffing and service needs. A request to add the supervisory classification was evaluated; adding a new supervisory classification, however, is not recommended as there is an existing Program Manager I who performs the supervisory functions. Also, through recent contract negotiations, the number of leads allowable in the VSO doubled.

Since October 2022, VSO has witnessed a notable turnover rate, with 10 of the eighteen positions experiencing staff changes. The reasons for these changes vary but can be broadly categorized into two distinct areas: career growth and personal circumstances. Specifically, seven staff members vacated their positions to pursue career advancement opportunities, while three separated due to personal circumstances. Increases in workloads due to the combination of high vacancies and increased demand for VSO services from the veteran community attributed to personal circumstance turnover. The relatively flat organizational structure resulted in limited opportunities for career growth within a highly specialized and narrow career field. After highlighting the existence of this lack of career growth in the VSO, management took immediate steps to designate an additional VSR II Lead position and create a Program Manager I position and VSR Supervisor positions, enabling greater career growth pathways for professional growth and advancement in the VSO.

The Department is working on sharing more information on these challenges through an off-agenda report to be issued by February 2, 2024.

Addressing Staffing Needs:

In addition to expanding the opportunities for career growth at the VSO, the three VSR II/I positions within the VSO is expected to ease caseload growth experienced by staff, while broadening team resources to address the needs of veterans seeking assistance. Current staffing levels at the VSO, to include the three additional VSR II/I, are recommended by SSA to be sustained in the FY 2024-2025 recommended budget. Veteran needs will be reviewed through the fiscal year to determine future support for veterans, including additional clerical support through Office Specialists and service support through Social Workers.

The VSO is a County and State funded agency established in 1944 to support the veteran population emerging from WW1 and WW2. Over the past 80 years, the VSO's mission has been to assist Veterans, Military Personnel, and their Families in obtaining federal, state, and local benefits earned through active-duty military service. During this time, the veteran population within Santa Clara County has grown to over 65,000 veterans, which continues to grow each year. The State of California statutory requirements related to the Veterans

Services Departments are contained in the Military and Veterans Code (M&V Code or M&VC), Article 4, Sections 970 through 974.5, and the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 12, Sections 450 through 455. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs statutory requirements related to the County VSO program are contained in Title 38, U.S. Code, Sections 1.503, 1.524, 1.525, and 14.626 through 14.633.

Benefits provided include disability compensation, non-service-connected pensions, education, burial assistance, dependency indemnity compensation, VA health care applications, and more. All staff in the VSO hold accreditation obtained through US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) approved training and proctored testing both with the State of California and the National Association of County Veteran Services Officers. Completion of training and becoming fully accredited requires eight to twelve months and enables VSO staff to file claims on behalf of and review the status of submitted claims with the USDVA. VSRs are expertly knowledgeable in administering Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, medical conditions and their co-relation to military service, records and military document management and research, and evidence development.

Employee Services Agency supports the recommended actions.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will positive impact on children and youth through the distribution of USDVA dependent allowances provided to veterans receiving monetary benefits.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action will have a positive impact on senior veterans, their families, and surviving spouses positively. Nationally, over 49% of veterans are over 65, reflecting the aging Vietnam War-era veteran population. Within Santa Clara County, the VSO currently supports over 20,626 senior veterans, their families, and surviving spouses with access to medical benefits and compensation provided through the USDVA.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

VSO would not receive approval to add three VSR I/II positions to meet staffing and department needs.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Clerk of the Board is requested to send notifications of completion to Darlyn Escalante and Daniel Crick of the Social Services Agency, and Jennifer Paredes-Fricano of ESA.

ATTACHMENTS:

- NS-5.24.54 - SSA - Adding three Veteran Services Rep II or Veteran Services Rep I in BU 501
- F85-145 Add 3 VSO FTE