



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

TIMOTHY T. BURTIS
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – MARCH 20, 2024 CODY M. KELLY, CHAIR

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. McCarron, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Bush
ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, also see attached

Chair Kelly called the meeting to order at 12:59 p.m.

1. SOCIAL SERVICES – ECONOMIC SECURITY: Sarah Merrick, Commissioner a. Personnel Resolution

Purpose: The authorize a M/C grade change from 31 to 32 for Principal Employment Counselors (6) in the Temporary Assistance Employment Division.

Objective/ Work Plan: Principal Employment Counselors supervise ECI's and ECII's. One Principal Employment Counselor supervisors Employment Aides. In total there are 41 ECI's, 5 ECII's, and 8 Employment Aides. Principal Employment Counselors supervise an average of 10 employees.

Their work activities include:

- Each team function follows unique regulations. Unique goals. Unique data. Unique population. They aren't supervising staff who perform duties that several other teams do.
- In addition to work tasks, they mentor staff on the complex element of quality case management practices related to medical conditions, all kinds of treatment, care navigation, education and training services, career exploration, job development, domestic violence, trauma informed approaches, substance abuse, person, motivational interviewing, de-escalation, criminal history, serious mental health, etc.
- Network with many community partners related to their team function. Represent DSS. Greater Syracuse Works, CNY Works One-Stop, Syracuse Build/I-81 project, Resettlement agencies, SCSD, EOC, RISE, PIL, HHQ, Crouse, Industrial Medical Associates, Medical Answering Service, Private medical providers, Drug and alcohol treatment providers, Mental Health providers, Social Security Administration, Vol. Lawyers, Legal Aid, Private Lawyers, homeless shelters, etc. Certain partner collaboration is based on funding – local, FFFS, SNAP E&T funding – awareness of this.

This request will align the salary for Principal Employment Counselors with work activities and those they supervise.

Funding Source: Salary savings in the 101. Averaging 45 vacancies throughout the department.

Budget: Annual increase for 6 Principal Employment Counselors = \$12,750.

- 2.5 years ago brought program into DSS; was a contract agency with OCC for 25 years
- Principal Employment Counselors oversee (6) Employment Counselor Teams
- 1 Team deals with exempt populations, which is 52% of Temporary Assistance population (~2,000 clients)
 - When this was with OCC, there was not a lot of focus on people who could not work
 - DSS built up staff to focus on:
 - How to make sure the exempt employees are assessed
 - If it is short-term disability, link them with appropriate community services
 - If long-term disability, link with community services, and transition to SST (Social Security Transition) Team
 - Their benefit and county's benefit financially to move TA clients to Social Security Income (SSI)

- Dedicated team for English as a second language individuals
 - Onondaga County is a refugee resettlement community
 - One benefit to refugees coming into this community is that they are automatically eligible for public benefits
 - Helping refugee families find employment
- 2 teams deal with people who are non-exempt, meaning they have no disabilities and are able to work
 - Work with them on how to put resume together, how to do interviews, job searches, what is needed to get a job
- Last year the whole team was able to get 1,521 individuals employed
- SST had 359 TA clients moved to SSI, which saved the county \$1.9M

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Is the pay rate competitive for this position?
 - Yes, all within context of pay scale for Onondaga County
 - If unionized, it would probably would be a Grade 11 or 12
- What are the cost savings from absorbing JOBSplus from OCC, and what is the fiscal impact seen in the last few years?
 - Will have to get back to the committee on budget to budget
 - Used to be almost a \$10M contract within DSS
 - Able to leverage TA reimbursement rate for employment staff, and charge the maximum on FFFS (Flexible Funds for Families)
 - Seeing savings with transition and a higher focus on non-exempt individuals

A motion was made by Mr. McCarron, seconded by Mr. Meaker, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

DATE: **MARCH 20, 2024**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Sarah Merrick	DSS-ES
Jessica Allen	Finops
Darcie Lesnick	Leg
John DeSantis	leg
Jim Beebe	leg
Joe Frakeschi	Counsel