

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 8, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee

FROM: Kate Austin Stanford, Director of Operations

SUBJECT: Public Health Grants and Billings Specialist (Position #2841) Vacant for More than Six Months

County Ordinance 29.52(15) requires the Personnel and Finance Committee and the County Executive to approve filling positions that are vacant longer than six (6) months. Position #2841, a Grants and Billing Specialist, has been vacant for more than six months after the incumbent resigned from Public Health and the position re-classified from Account Clerk II.

What is the nature of the work or what is the essential function of the position?

The Grants and Billing Specialist will focus on systems building to support effective grant management and budget analysis capabilities within the Budget & Finance unit, in addition to billing and a reduced purchasing role. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial management responsibilities of the department have grown increasingly complex with the addition of new Federal, State, and Local funding streams for local health departments. The reporting requirements have increased as well, and we anticipate needing to prepare for thorough audits of each of these funding streams in the future.

This position will allow for additional budget forecasting, spending analysis, and financial reporting capabilities with the goal of maximizing fiscal resources to slow the spread of COVID-19.

How has this function been fulfilled without this position?

Following the resignation of the incumbent, the department performed an analysis of the existing structure and scope of work assigned to this position. Through this analysis, we determined that a Limited Time Employee (LTE) was needed to perform the purchasing responsibilities along with the billing of smaller, less complex grants, given the increased demand on the Budget & Finance team due to unprecedented pandemic-related spending. In addition, the more complex duties were distributed to other members of the team who are currently operating above capacity.

What will be the impact on the Department's function and mission if the position remains vacant?

The current staffing level is unable to perform the necessary tracking, billing and reporting for these new complex grants. This could result in a higher probability of a finding of material weakness as an audit outcome. The department will also struggle to perform timely financial analyses to inform strategic decisions; this will affect our ability to maximize all fiscal resources.