



JAMIE KUHN
INTERIM DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dane County Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division

Interim Director – Astra Iheukumere
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 13, 2024
TO: Chair and Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee
FROM: Astra Iheukumere, Interim Director
RE: Program Specialist Position (#3507) Vacant for More than Six Months

County Ordinance 29.52(15) requires the Personnel and Finance Committee and the County Executive to approve filling a position that is vacant longer than six (6) months. Position #3507 has not been filled for longer than six (6) months. This position was created in the 2023 budget as a Crisis Response Program Developer. The County Board recently adopted 2023 RES-422 which authorized the reclassification of this position to a Behavioral Health Program Specialist.

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

The purpose of the position is to explore the establishment of a non-law enforcement embedded mobile crisis response system outside the City of Madison. This requires convening partners involved in responding to people in Dane County who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis, mapping out system strengths and gaps, and recommending actions to enhance Dane County's Crisis Response System.

Behavioral Health Program Specialists perform a number of other tasks including, but not limited to performing utilization review functions and overseeing the quality improvement in a variety of behavioral health programs, monitoring purchase of service agencies and programs for annual contractual expectations and compliance with federal, state, and county program requirements, making budgetary and policy recommendations for assigned programs, and assisting in the preparation and review of competitive Requests for Proposals.

How has this function been fulfilled without his position?

The function of exploring the establishment of a non-law enforcement embedded mobile crisis response system outside the City of Madison has been undertaken by a Behavioral Health Program Specialist who is already on staff. Support and assistance has been provided by others in the department, most prominently by the Community Services Manager for the Urgent Care Unit as well as another Behavioral Health Program Specialist in the same unit.

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

Other duties that are critical to the administration of behavioral health services funded and managed by Dane County will be left undone. This will lead to inefficient operation of these programs, a poor use of the funds allocated to for services, and an increasing inability to serve Dane County residents' behavioral health needs in a way that provides true help.