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Director – Shawn Tessmann

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 26, 2021
TO: Chair and Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee
FROM: Shawn Tessmann, Director
RE: Information and Assistance Specialist Positions Vacant for More Than Six Months, Position #2884 and #3253

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. Two Information and Assistance Specialist positions, #2884 and #3253 in the Department of Human Services, have not been able to be filled for longer than six (6) months. Position 3253 was added as a new Bilingual (Hmong) position in the 2020 budget. The position was recruited but interviews with eligible candidates were not able to be scheduled before a hiring freeze went into effect in March 2020. Position 2884 was vacated in March 2020 and was not approved for posting prior to the hiring freeze going into effect. There is now a need to fill both of these positions at the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC).

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

Both positions 2884 and 3253 are assigned to the ADRC. Information and Assistance Specialists respond to requests from Dane County residents seeking resources designed to assist adults with long-term care needs due to the effects of aging or disabilities. Information and Assistance Specialists conduct assessments for publicly funded long-term care services, offer options counseling, and work collaboratively with services to advocate for customer needs and assure services are delivered.

How has this function been fulfilled without this position?

Existing staff have had to take on additional duties and have had to prioritize assignments in light of these vacancies. The volume of requests for services is beginning to increase. With vaccines becoming available in the community, we are anticipating a time when operations will begin to return to pre-pandemic functioning. This is particularly true for the filling of the Bilingual (Hmong) position (#3253), which will allow the ADRC to do more outreach to the Hmong in Dane County and to serve them in their native language. There is currently one Bilingual (Hmong) position at the ADRC for

which managing the current caseload of primary Hmong speakers has had to be prioritized over community outreach.

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

Managing an increasing workload will become more difficult for existing staff. Outreach efforts to all of Dane County, particularly to those who are primary Hmong speakers, will suffer. Outreach is designed to inform Dane County residents of the services that are available at the ADRC and in the publicly funded long-term care service system.