

Date: October 25, 2016

To: Chair and Members of the Personnel and Finance Committee

From: Janel Heinrich, Director
Lesly Scott, PH Supervisor

Subject: Approval to hire Public Health Planner – Technical Assistance

County Ordinance 29, 52(16) requires the Personnel and Finance Committee, along with the County Executive, to approve filling positions that are new or have been vacant longer than six months. I write to request approval to fill 1.0 FTE Public Health Planner – Technical Assistance, P11. The 2016 Public Health budget includes this position with a projected hire date of fall 2016. We have reclassified position #2684 to create this new position. We have exceeded our vacancy savings goals for 2016.

[Wisconsin State Statute, Chapter 251.05](#) mandates local public health departments to conduct activities leading to community health improvement planning. Additional rules governing mandated community health assessment activities are found in Wisconsin [Department of Health Services Administrative Rules Chapter DHS 140.04](#). The mission of the Policy, Planning and Evaluation (PPE) Division is to support these functions and the overall work of Public Health Madison & Dane County. Personnel in PPE conduct public health data analysis and tracking, policy development, program guidance, and research evidence-based information to support and promote health equity. This unit performs activities including epidemiologic analysis, economic analysis, social and health policy analysis, program evaluation, and community capacity building.

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

One role of PPE is to support staff in City and County agencies, as well as assist community partners, to improve decision making in public policy, improving short-term and long-term health outcomes and reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in Dane County.

What are some examples of complex public health challenges that would benefit from a Public Health Planner skilled in Assessment, Analysis and Technical Assistance?

- Evidence-based strategies to boost food security among specific populations, including low-income working families and older adults
- Reduce the harm of opiate addiction and overdose in Dane County
- Reducing use of costly emergency and urgent care services among people with risk of falls, preventable complications from chronic disease, or acute dental pain
- Shifting incentives among community service providers to improve care coordination in behavioral health
- Reduce youth access to tobacco and nicotine products

- Support for comprehensive community initiatives to improve birth outcomes and reduce disparities

Qualified candidates bring academic training in statistics and applied research methods, including qualitative methods (e.g., interviewing, focus group facilitation, analyzing qualitative data). They also bring experience forging community partnerships among partners who may not have the staff expertise to access or analyze many kinds of local, state, and national data.

How has this function been fulfilled during the vacancy?

This is an additional (new) position and the justification statements above address this question.

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

County and City agency partners, health care systems and their affiliates, local community service providers regularly submit requests for data collection, analysis and interpretation to support improving health and quality of life goals. It is the role of the local health department to provide this information and support our community in achieving these goals. The department cannot adequately address these requests given the few numbers of staff currently in the PPE Division. There are requests from various city and county departments as well as other stakeholders (County Parks, County Board office, County Planning, Housing, Madison Fire Department, and MMSD) currently in the queue while we wait to return to staffing levels that provide us with the capacity to respond.

Additionally, PHMDC is preparing to seek accreditation which, if awarded, will boost the standing and, potentially, the funding of our local health department. In order to plan and execute the accreditation process, we need to have a variety of staff with different skills to support these efforts by managing and leading the mandated Community Health Assessment (CHA) and the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) processes. The CHA and the CHIP are the roadmaps which will guide our population health improvement efforts over the next 5 years. This position will also play a role in these efforts.

Thank you for your help in filling this important position in PHMDC. Please let me know if you need any additional information.