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Agency of Administration

**TO: Joint Fiscal Committee
Government Accountability Committee
House Committee on Government Operations
Senate Committee on Government Operations**

FROM: Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner

DATE: May 21, 2015

SUBJECT: Position Pilot Program

In accordance with Act 179, Sec. E.100(d), Secretary of Administration Justin Johnson has approved the attached position pilot request from the Department for Children and Families (DCF).

The written description required by Act 179, Sec. E.100(d)(4), including the method for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the positions, as provided by DCF, is attached for your information.

The Department of Human Resources fully supports this request and we believe the request is an appropriate use of the Position Pilot.

Summary of Department for Children and Families' Position Pilot Request

DCF is requesting approval for nine new positions at the Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center (Woodside). By adding these positions Woodside will rely less on temporary staff; will improve the staff to resident ratio; and will result in an increase in the quality of care and a reduction in staff turnover and overtime. In addition we believe reducing the use of temporary staff rates will improve the safety of both residents and staff by allowing the increased use of low level interventions.

The request is cost neutral with the savings anticipated in the reduction the cost of temporary staff and overtime.

c: Secretary Johnson
Commissioner Schatz
M. Paulger

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Agency of Human Services

MEMORANDUM

TO: Justin Johnson, Secretary of Administration
Maribeth Spellman, Commissioner, Department of Human Resources

FROM: Ken Schatz, Commissioner

CC: Hal Cohen, Secretary, Agency of Human Services

DATE: May 14, 2015

RE: Position Pilot Request for Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center

Introduction

The Department for Children and Families (DCF) is requesting approval for nine new positions at Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center (Woodside) pursuant to the Position Pilot Program (pilot) created in Section E.100(d) of Act 179 (2014). The pilot was created to help participating departments more effectively manage costs of overtime, compensatory time, temporary employees and contractual work by removing the position cap with the goal of maximizing resources to the greatest benefit of Vermont taxpayers. In implementing the pilot, DCF is authorized to create new positions as long as they are funded within existing appropriations and approved by the Secretary of Administration. This is DCF's fourth pilot request.

Pilot Purpose & Description of Requested New Positions

Woodside is a secure residential treatment program for youth between the ages of 10 and 18 that provides comprehensive educational, rehabilitative, family support, vocational and specialized treatment services. In 2011, Woodside re-purposed and expanded its services, combining its former male-only program with its treatment program and offering every resident, regardless of gender, length of stay, and/or disposition status, the same evidence-based treatment opportunities. As a result, the number of youth receiving treatment services increased and Woodside became recognized as a cost-effective alternative to hospitalization. In June 2012, Woodside received a three year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Since repurposing in 2011, the average daily population at Woodside has increased. In state fiscal year 2013, the average daily population in the program was 14 youth compared to 17 youth in state fiscal year 2014. In the last six months of state fiscal year 2014, the average census at Woodside was 20 youth. During its entire history, Woodside has relied on temporary staff to perform some of its core functions and Woodside has had to increase its temporary staff numbers to address the increased population in the program as well as the increased need for the program to provide one-to-one supports for residents.

The reliance on temporary staff at Woodside to perform core functions is not sustainable. Temporary staff at Woodside receive in-depth training and must meet the same requirements as permanent staff in order to be hired. Since Woodside has been re-purposed into a residential treatment facility, the turnover rate for





temporary staff has dramatically increased. Of the 20 temporary staff who worked during the summer of 2012, not one is still working at Woodside. Of the 21 temporary staff working during the summer of 2013, only seven are still with the program. Constantly recruiting and training temporary staff is costly and time consuming. In addition, the reliance on temporary staff and the issues with recruiting and training temporary staff has resulted in the fact that Woodside has had to rely on increased overtime for its permanent classified staff.

The overtime requirements for permanent staff and the constant turnover of temporary staff at Woodside have also resulted in an increased turnover in permanent staff. Since the summer of 2012, Woodside has turned over 19 of its 42 positions, which equates to a 45 percent turnover rate for this 24 month period. Woodside is concerned that the rapid turnover of both temporary and permanent staff negatively impacts safety in the program and the treatment milieu for its residents.

As a solution to the temporary staff and overtime issues and to allow for a staffing pattern that can accommodate the increased utilization and needs of the program, Woodside proposes to create seven new youth counselor positions to provide direct support to residents, school behavior interventionist services, school instruction and tutoring, coverage for staff vacancies and leave time, transport coverage and enhanced community access to residents preparing to transition from Woodside to step down placements in the community.

Woodside also proposes to add two new positions to provide front desk and key control coverage, which has historically always been performed by temporary employees. These positions are very important to the safety and security of the program as they monitor the building, control foot traffic, admit and escort visitors and provide radio and key control functions for the building. Because the temporary staff who perform these essential job functions are less experienced, supervisors are called away from the floor many times a day to assist with the front desk responsibilities.

Method and Source of Funding

This pilot request for nine new positions is cost neutral with the savings anticipated from the reduction in the cost of temporary staff and overtime. The source of the funds for this pilot request is a combination of general fund and global commitment.

	State Fiscal Year 2014 Actual Costs before Position Pilot Request	Projected Annualized Costs with 9 New Positions Created through the Position Pilot
Temporary Woodside staff	\$429,312	\$70,000
Overtime for Woodside staff	\$373,541	\$150,000
7 new youth counselor positions through the position pilot ⁱ		\$417,228
2 new youth center workers B ⁱⁱ		\$101,426
Total Annual Cost	\$802,853	\$729,763

Woodside currently uses a staffing pattern for some of its youth counselors that are either a 56 or a 59 hours shift. The 56 hour shifts are during the week and are either Monday from 7 am to Wednesday 3 pm or Wednesday 2 pm to Friday 10 pm. The 59 hour shift is over the weekend and is Friday 9 pm to Monday 8 am. This shift schedule allows for a one hour shift change meeting for each incoming shift. Youth counselors who work these 56 or 59 hour shifts receive a 13.4 percent pay stipend for staying overnight in the building. With the seven new youth counselor positions, Woodside plans to use one of the youth counselors to work a 56 or 59



hour shift. The other new six youth counselors will work four ten-hour shifts from 11 am to 9 pm. This 40 hour per week schedule with no overnights eliminates the need to pay these new six full-time youth counselors the 13.4 percent stipend. In addition, adding these new youth counselor positions eliminates the need to utilize temporary youth counselor staff to work 56 or 59 hour shifts with the increased stipend to provide one to one support for high risk residents.

The two new youth center workers will be assigned to the front control desk. This means that Woodside can use its remaining temporary youth counselor staff to cover approved scheduled leave time for permanent staff at the standard wage rate without the stipend. Woodside calculates that the amount spent on temporary staff will be reduced from \$429,312 in state fiscal year 2014 to an annual cost of \$70,000.

The addition of these six new youth counselors also means that Woodside has coverage during the day when the majority of transports are scheduled, which will drastically reduce the amount of overtime that is currently spent in providing transports for youth in the program. The additional new staff members also means that Woodside has more staff people to cover short notice sick and other requested leave. Woodside calculates that overtime spending will be reduced from \$373,541 in state fiscal year 2014 to an annual cost of \$150,000. In order to ensure that spending on overtime and temporary youth counselor staff is reduced as planned, the Woodside Director will review the staff schedule for each quarter in advance and after each pay period.

Evaluation of Cost Effectiveness of Pilot

The language in the Big Bill authorizing the pilot program also directs each participating department to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the pilot in addition to describing the source of funds and ensuring that the pilot will be funded within existing appropriations. The cost-effectiveness of this pilot request is evaluated through the reduced spending in both overtime and temporary staff as described above. The cost-effectiveness is also evaluated through improved safety outcomes at Woodside.

Woodside uses performance based standards to identify, monitor, and improve conditions and treatment services provided to youth using national standards and outcome measures. One important marker of success at Woodside is the extent to which staff can address challenging resident behavior without the use of higher level interventions. In state fiscal year 2013, Woodside staff successfully utilized low level interventions (LLIs) with residents who were displaying aggressive and dangerous behaviors 81 percent of the time. This means that residents were deescalated 81 percent of the time without staff having to resort to physical or other high level interventions.

The increased resident population in the program has meant that current staff resources are spread thin, which results in the diminished ability of staff to recognize antecedents to dangerous behavior and use lower level interventions. The increased population at Woodside has also meant that there has been an increase in the number of residents who need one-to-one supervision to remain safely in the milieu. In state fiscal year 2014, Woodside staff successfully utilized LLIs 60 percent of the time, which was a decrease of 21 percent from previous state fiscal year.

As part of its monitoring of outcomes, Woodside collects data from residents and staff about their perceptions of safety at the program. During state fiscal year 2013, when the staff successfully utilized LLIs 81 percent of the time, only three percent of staff reported feeling unsafe at work. Residents during this same time period reported feeling unsafe nine percent of the time. In state fiscal year 2014, with an increased population and lower use of LLIs, staff reported feeling unsafe 35 percent of the time and residents 64 percent of the time. These percentages are unacceptable. Woodside staff who do not feel safe cannot deliver the best services and youth in the program who feel unsafe don't reap the benefits of treatment.

Conclusion

The addition of these nine new positions at Woodside enables the program to ensure the safety of residents and staff with the increased use of LLIs and an improved staff to resident ratio. The addition of permanent staff with less reliance on temporary staff equates to increased quality of care and a reduction in staff turnover and overtime. Woodside will continue to monitor these important outcomes.

The Big Bill language that created this pilot states in Section E.100(d)(4): “At least 15 days prior to the establishment of Pilot positions, the Joint Fiscal Committee, the Government Accountability Committee, and the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations shall be provided a written description from the Pilot entity and the Commissioner of Human Resources of the method for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the positions.” DCF requests that the Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources forwards this position pilot request to these legislative committees. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have or information you may need. Thank you.

ⁱ The youth counselor position is a pay grade 21 position with an estimated annual cost of \$59,604 (please see attached).

ⁱⁱ The front desk operator position is officially titled as a Woodside Youth Center Worker B and is a pay grade 18. The estimated annual cost for one full-time position is \$50,713 (please see attached).