

2023-2024 Budget Preparation - Regular Additional Service Request

Council

ASR # 2023- 6765 **Fund 1** **Cost Cente 1100** **Originator: Cathy Halka**

Expenditure Type: Ongoing **Add'l FTE** **Add'l Space** **Priority 1**

Name of Request: *Whatcom County Council Internship Pilot Program*

Costs:	Object	Object Description	2023 Requested	2023 Approved	2024 Requested	2024 Approved
	6120	Extra Help	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
	Totals		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

1. Description of Request:

a) Describe the proposed activity or service, and indicate whether it is a higher or lower priority than existing services in your department budget.

The Whatcom County Council Internship Pilot Program will engage up to two interns to assist Councilmembers with projects, which may range from administrative to legislative policy research. Interns will be students recently graduated from a college or univeristy or currently a student in either their junior or senior year of undergraduat studies or a graduate student. Internships will be part time, approximately 15-20 hours per week, for 10 weeks and run for each of the fall, winter, and spring quarters. One Council staff person will be assigned as an internship program coordinator, but the intern will receive assignments directly from any of the seven Councilmembers. Interns will meeting with councilmembers and receive information and guidance from the Internship Coordinator. Other activities may be arranged to help interns learn more about the county.

b) Who are the primary customers for this service?

Councilmembers will benefit from extra assistance with their projects. Citizens of Whatcom County will benefit from Councilmembers' work. Interns will gain valuable educational experiences working with Councilmembers.

2. Describe the problem this request addresses and why Whatcom County needs to address it.

There is an opportunity to engage a workforce of people from our local colleges and universities who are engaged in studies in political science, environmental studies, urban planning, communications, and other disciplines that align with the work of the County Council.

Whatcom County Councilmembers can do more with the assistance of interns with administrative tasks, project support, and rpolicy esearch for special projects and items on the Council agendas.

Councilmembers serve in part-time positions, and many Councilmembers hold part- or full-time jobs concurrently, While Councilmembers can arrange unpaid internships themselves, a paid internship program with a council staff person as a coordinator has the ability to create a better experience for the intern while staffing Councilmembers.

3. Options

a) What other options have you considered? Why is this the best option?

Hiring interns as temporary extra help employees is a better option than hiring additional staffing, which comes with a high cost and a long-term commitment. An internship program allows for additional support without the long-term commitment or the increased cost of salaries and benefits while still providing additional Councilmember support the Council has requested. As a paid internship, provides fair pay, increasing opportunities for students who depend on extra income to cover costs while enrolled in college.

b) What are the specific cost savings? (Quantify)

A full time employee at a \$55,000 annual salary costs the county around \$80,000 a year when benefits are included. Paid part-time interns can provide additional support to Councilmembers and at a fraction of the cost to the county.

4. Outcomes / Objectives

a) What outcomes will be delivered and when?

Councilmembers will receive additional staff support for the fall, winter, and spring academic quarters when they are busiest. Interns will learn about the county legislative branch of government and the work of individual councilmembers.

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b) How will you know whether the outcomes happened?

Interns will provide assistance to Councilmembers and receive an enriching educational experience. Some interns may receive college credits for their internship experience.

5. Other Departments/Agencies

a) Will this ASR impact other departments or agencies? If so, please identify the departments and/or agencies impacted and explain what the impact(s) will be.

Human Resources may be involved in recruitment and onboarding of paid interns. Finance will issue paychecks to the interns. Facilities will issue badges for the prox locks.

b) If another department or agency is responsible for part of the implementation, name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for.

6. What is the funding source for this request?

General Fund