

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Health

Human Services

Suppl ID # 3291 Fund 133 Cost Center 133100 Originator: Anne Deacon

Year 1 2021 Add'l FTE Priority 1

Name of Request: Housing Specialist

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission)

Date

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	4313.2500	Housing & Related Svcs Tax	(\$24,169)
	6110	Regular Salaries & Wages	\$16,432
	6210	Retirement	\$1,684
	6230	Social Security	\$1,257
	6245	Medical Insurance	\$4,104
	6255	Other H&W Benefits	\$467
	6259	Worker's Comp-Interfund	\$182
	6269	Unemployment-Interfund	\$43
	Request Total		\$0

1a. Description of request:

The Health Department is seeking budget authority to add an additional Housing Specialist in the Human Services Division.

1b. Primary customers:

Whatcom County households who qualify for low-income housing.

2. Problem to be solved:

The expanse and complexity of work in the homelessness and affordable housing program has increased significantly over the past few years. Grant revenues from the state and federal government have increased, along with the need for comprehensive reporting to the funders as well as program development. Homelessness issues locally have increased the need for the county to work more closely with city and community partners, and has also increased the need for county staff to provide intensive technical assistance to housing providers. Two new local revenue sources have created the need for a robust affordable housing development component in the housing program that requires new sets of skills and new community partners. The current two Housing Specialists have been struggling to meet the work demands of the program now, and with additional monies and associated expectations, staffing is now insufficient to meet the expectations, demands, and opportunities that the multimillion-dollar program has.

3a. Options / Advantages:

The Human Services Manager and Human Services Supervisor have been performing some of the work of the Housing Specialists in an effort to meet work demands. This is not sustainable at the level currently required. New stable local monies require staff technical expertise in affordable housing development and a consistent point person in the county. Hiring an additional Housing Specialist is the best option to meet the increasing demands of the program while simultaneously creating in-house expertise and stability in affordable housing development.

3b. Cost savings:

Two new sources of local monies that support affordable housing development eliminate the need for general fund support of this position. Increased revenue from document recording fees will also help

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Health

Human Services

Suppl ID # 3291

Fund 133

Cost Center 133100

Originator: Anne Deacon

offset the costs of this new position in future years.

4a. Outcomes:

The county will have an affordable housing development specialist that will facilitate creation of new housing units in the county, serve as the county point person for affordable housing efforts, and support the need for reasonable workloads for the housing program staff who can then meet demands with high quality work.

4b. Measures:

The new Housing Specialist will be hired before year end and begin to assume the work already accomplished in affordable housing, and expand upon it.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

The city of Bellingham is supportive of this additional county position since it will improve collaborative efforts in both affordable housing development as well as addressing the current challenges facing those who are experiencing homelessness. Small city governments are depending on the county to provide leadership and technical expertise in affordable housing development outside the limits of the city of Bellingham.

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

N/A

6. Funding Source:

Sales and use tax for housing and related services Fund

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Health

Communicable Disease & Epidemiology

Suppl ID # 3296

Fund 138

Cost Center

Originator: Erika Lautenbach

Expenditure Type: One-Time

Year 1 2021

Add'l FTE

Add'l Space

Priority 1

Name of Request: 11 positions to support COVID response

X

Department Head Signature (Required on Hard Copy Submission) *Erika Lautenbach* Date *9/3/21*

Costs:	Object	Object Description	Amount Requested
	6110	Regular Salaries & Wages	\$171,908
	6210	Retirement	\$20,611
	6230	Social Security	\$13,151
	6245	Medical Insurance	\$74,237
	6255	Other H&W Benefits	\$8,498
	6259	Worker's Comp-Interfund	\$2,926
	6269	Unemployment-Interfund	\$447
	Request Total		\$291,778

1a. Description of request:

In order to support COVID response efforts, the Health Department requests spending authority to support the on-going COVID response operations through December 31, 2021.

This funding request supports the addition of 11 temp with benefits positions. In addition to 6 Case and contact investigator (CCI) positions, it includes addition of 1 logistics coordinator, 1 communications specialist, 2 Clerk III positions and 1 program specialist full-time temporary with benefit positions. These positions are funded for a full 3 months with ARPA funding. These positions are may be extended into 2022 as COVID response needs and funding are determined.

1b. Primary customers:

Customers are all residents of Whatcom County, who will benefit from timely communications, response and support from Whatcom County Health department.

2. Problem to be solved:

Temporary positions create a structural barrier for stable and consistent support as temporary extra help employees may only work full time for three months and then drop hours to 16 hours per week. This challenge contributes to turnover in favor of full-time positions, instability in staffing, severe administrative burden to continually recruit, hire and train additional temporary staff, and reduced capacity to respond to the pandemic.

During the last peak in January/February 2021, we supported this work through shared staffing from other agencies through the structure of Whatcom Unified Command. However, with the stand down of unified command on July 31, after 18 months staff that were fulfilling these roles have been returned to their home agencies.

In order to meet support, response and communications needs required to support substantial and high levels of transmission of COVID-19 in Whatcom County, we need full-time temporary with benefits personnel in logistics, clerical, communications and outreach to manage that workload. The program specialist position will provide community outreach, information, referral, service coordination and health promotion related to COVID-19 for Hispanic/Latino/Latinx community members who experience cultural

Supplemental Budget Request

Status: Pending

Health

Communicable Disease & Epidemiology

Suppl ID # 3296

Fund 138

Cost Center

Originator: Erika Lautenbach

and linguistic barriers. The Communication Specialist request is in response to the sustained need for timely, reliable, and comprehensive communication and tools to reach residents and the media.

While the intensity of COVID case burden has varied throughout the pandemic, the demand for regular communication locally has consistently remained high and is tied to the success of prevention measures and the credibility of the Health Department and Whatcom County. This position will both provide additional support for communication, with an emphasis on graphic design and videography for the successful candidate or by reassignment of duties within the existing team of Communications Specialists. These are two areas of communication for which the Health Department has contracted services that could be met, in part, with additional in-house capacity. Additionally, adding another full-time position would allow the Health Department to achieve its communication objectives during the fall and winter months without relying on other County or city agencies for temporary staffing reassignments.

3a. Options / Advantages:

Employees will be advantaged by having benefits, and by having some stability and predictability in their employment status. The County will be advantaged by having a more stable workforce and the ability to attract and retain well-qualified individuals needed to respond to COVID. With the 5th surge of COVID cases, we will be able to support logistics requests from partner agencies, public communications and administrative support for test and vaccine scheduling.

3b. Cost savings:

These positions will support the COVID response and allow regular staff ability to take vacation and decrease overtime. These positions will also reduce need to pull regular staff from other program areas (or other agencies) to support COVID surge response, additionally surged staff often have a higher rate of pay than these new positions. The more effective the response, the sooner the county will recover economically.

4a. Outcomes:

Whatcom County businesses and healthcare facilities will be supported with PPE and other supplies logistics coordination. Communication support will result in increased information and data to residents, media and elected officials countywide, and additional volume of linguistically and culturally appropriate education materials and tools for organizations impacted by the virus. More staff available to assist in the response, less administrative time spent in recruitment, hiring and training, more efficient operations with better trained and more experienced staff, less reliance on pulling regular staff from other program areas; when regular staff are surged, there is often a period training/refreshing needed not to mention leaving the programs that are pulled from shorthanded.

4b. Measures:

Adequate community testing; 90% of cases called within 24 hours; 80% of contacts called within 48 hours; daily monitoring of all people in isolation and quarantine; timely contact with businesses, schools, day cares, healthcare organizations, and long-term care facilities. Outbreaks will be minimized and managed effectively in partnership with employers. Increased social media posts, information on website, media briefings, education materials, and other communication tools as needed.

5a. Other Departments/Agencies:

5b. Name the person in charge of implementation and what they are responsible for:

6. Funding Source:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds