



COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
SEVET JOHNSON, PsyD
County Executive Officer

Mike Pettit
Assistant County Executive Officer

Scott Powers
County Chief Financial Officer

Danielle Keys
County Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

April 29, 2025

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

Subject: Approval for the County Executive Officer to Appoint Melissa Livingston as an Extra-Help Employee to Fill the Critically Needed Position of Human Services Agency Director Until the new Human Services Agency Director Position is Filled and Other Consultant Services during the Director Transition; Certify the Nature of Mrs. Livingston’s Employment and Appointment in Accordance with Government Code Section 7522.56, Subdivision (f)(1).

Recommendations:

It is recommended that your Board:

1. Certify the nature of employment of Melissa Livingston as a retired annuitant providing leadership, direction, and management as the Human Services Agency Director and other consulting services and find that her employment is necessary to fill a critically needed position before the 180 days have passed since her retirement from the County of Ventura in accordance with Government Code section 7522.56 subdivision (f)(1) for the reasons set forth in this letter; and
2. Approve and Authorize the County Executive Officer to appoint Melissa Livingston as a retired annuitant, extra-help employee to provide critically vital Human Services Agency leadership, direction, management, and consulting until the new Human Services Agency director position is filled and for a period of overlap for consulting during the director transition.

Fiscal Impact

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
Revenues	\$0	\$0
Costs	\$16,190	\$10,793
Total Costs	\$16,190	\$10,793

Funding Source: Human Services Agency Administration Budget

Funding Match Required: None

Sufficient funding exists within the existing Human Services Agency budget and the anticipated FY2025-26 budget to cover the proposed costs due to the vacant director position. The rate paid will be no higher than the previously compensated hourly base rate for the director position and no additional premium pay, incentives, or benefits will be provided as part of the compensation.

Discussion:

Human Services Agency (HSA) Director Melissa Livingston retired after 45 years of County Service on April 26, 2025. To maintain continuity of oversight and provide leadership direction during the balance of the recruitment process and to prevent disruption to the agency in an already uncertain environment, it is recommended that former director Livingston be brought back as a retired annuitant, extra-help employee, to serve during the gap in time until a new director is able to begin service at the County and to provide some consultative services for a brief period of time (approximately four weeks) in transitional support of the new director. It is anticipated that the work will be of limited part-time duration consisting of approximately 120 hours of work for the remaining portion of the current fiscal year and a total of 80 hours of work over the first six months of the following fiscal year.

Pursuant to Government Code section 7522.56, County retirees are required to have a separation from service (sit out period) of 180 days between retiring and returning to work for the County, at which time they may work no more than 960 hours per fiscal year. However, Government Code section 7522.56, subdivision (f)(1), allows a retiree to be employed before 180 days have passed if the County certifies the nature of the employment and that "the employment is necessary to fill a critically needed position." Further under section 7522.56(f)(1), the appointment must be approved by the governing body at a public meeting as part of the regular meeting agenda. Given Mrs. Livingston's extensive and unique experience and background with the County and as former Director of the Human Services Agency, it is critical that she is brought back to temporarily assist the County and the Agency in order to maintain uninterrupted service to some of the most at-risk individuals in our communities. I am grateful for her willingness to do so.

We know a smooth and seamless transition of the Human Services Agency Leadership is important in maintaining essential and vital services for our communities. Mrs. Livingston has been an exemplary leader and has unique knowledge and skills that are critical in ensuring this smooth transition occurs.

Given Mrs. Livingston's extensive intimate knowledge of countywide operations, especially Human Services Agency operations and regulations, in addition to her extensive work with our Health Care Agency, State and Federal Offices, local community-based organizations and partners it is recommended that your Board approve the recommendations contained in this letter. As such I appreciate your Board's consideration of this request.

Strategic Plan:

This item contributes to the Board of Supervisors (Board's) 2024-2027 strategic priorities of:

- I. Healthy, Safe, and Resilient Communities
- II. Addressing Homelessness and Lifting up the Most Vulnerable

This item has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, and County Counsel. If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact Mike Pettit at 654-2864 or me at 654-2681

Sincerely,



Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

cc: Tiffany North, County Counsel
Jeff Burgh, Auditor-Controller