



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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First District

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Second District

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Third District

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Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: May 6, 2025

20

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**PUBLIC HEARING IN COMPLIANCE WITH ASSEMBLY BILL 2561 (AB 2561),
CODIFIED IN GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 3502.3, REGARDING COUNTY OF
SAN DIEGO VACANCIES, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
EFFORTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill 2561 (AB 2561). Codified in Government Code section 3502.3, AB 2561 requires public agencies to present the status of vacancies by bargaining unit, and to present recruitment and retention efforts at a public hearing at least once per fiscal year prior to budget adoption. Recognized employee organizations are entitled to make a presentation at the hearing for positions within the organizations' bargaining unit.

Government Code section 3502.3 also requires public agencies with vacancies that exceed 20% in a single bargaining unit, to provide additional information including the average number of days to complete the hiring process from when a position is posted and opportunities to improve compensation and other working conditions.

This is a request for the Board of Supervisors to receive the 2025 Vacancy, Recruitment and Retention presentation in compliance with AB 2561, and to receive and consider public comment.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Hold a public hearing on May 6, 2025, in accordance with Government Code section 3502.3
2. Receive the 2025 County of San Diego Vacancy, Recruitment and Retention presentation.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Equity is essential in efforts to attract and retain an engaged workforce. Today's presentation provides vacancy, recruitment and retention efforts that will inform the County of San Diego of the status vacancies and areas of challenges in hiring. This will support County departments in retaining a skilled, adaptable, and diverse workforce to provide essential services to the communities served in San Diego.

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SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Maintaining a strong workforce through effective recruitment and retention directly supports the County's sustainability goals by enhancing our ability to consistently deliver essential services. Strong retention, and strategic staffing efforts ensure we minimize potential service disruptions and maximize resource efficiency, enabling the County to respond effectively to community needs and safeguard against future economic and social vulnerabilities.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's request to hold a public hearing and receive the 2025 County of San Diego Vacancy, Recruitment, and Retention presentation related to AB 2561. There is no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On September 22, 2024, Governor Newsom signed into law AB 2561 which is codified as Government Code section 3502.3. AB 2561 requires public agencies to present the status of vacancies by bargaining unit and recruitment and retention efforts at a public hearing at least once per fiscal year prior to budget adoption. Recognized employee organizations are entitled to make a presentation.

In passing AB 2561, the legislature determined that job vacancies in local government are a widespread and significant problem for the public sector affecting occupations across wage levels and educational requirements. High job vacancies impact public service delivery and the workers who are required to handle heavier workloads, with understaffing leading to burnout and increased turnover that further exacerbate staffing challenges. The legislature further determined there is a statewide interest in ensuring that public agency operations are appropriately staffed and that high vacancy rates do not undermine public employee labor relations.

Government Code section 3502.3 also requires public agencies with vacancies that exceed 20% in a single bargaining unit, to provide additional information including the average number of days to complete the hiring process from when a position is posted and opportunities to improve compensation and other working conditions. There are 25 bargaining units at the County represented by 9 Unions/Employee Associations; none of the County bargaining units meet the threshold of a 20% vacancy rate.

As of March 7, 2025, the County's overall vacancy rate is 6%. The County has 20,477 budgeted positions with 1,226 positions vacant. The vacancy rate by bargaining unit is as follows:

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Union Name	Bargaining Unit	Budgeted positions	Vacant Positions	Vacancy Rate
Service Employees International Union, Local 221	(AE) Appraisal, Fiscal, and Purchasing	527	43	8.2%
	(CL) Clerical	2,113	89	4.2%
	(FS) Food Service	154	8	5.2%
	(HS) Health Services	571	78	13.7%
	(MM) Middle Management	1,114	82	7.4%
	(PR) Professional	1,470	160	10.9%
	(PS) Public Services	1,778	140	7.9%
	(RN) Registered Nurses	615	17	2.8%
	(SS) Social Services Supervisors	458	7	1.5%
	(SW) Social Workers	3,177	94	3.0%
District Attorney Investigators' Association	(DI) District Attorney Investigators	90	6	6.7%
	(DM) Dist. Atty Investigator Middle Management	43	2	4.7%
San Diego County Deputy District Attorneys Association	(AM) Child Support Program Management	4	0	0.0%
	(AS) Child Support Program Attorneys	13	0	0.0%

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Union Name	Bargaining Unit	Budgeted positions	Vacant Positions	Vacancy Rate
	(DA) Deputy District Attorneys	342	-5	-1.5% *
Deputy Sheriffs' Association of San Diego County	(DS) Deputy Sheriffs	2,718	246	9.1%
	(SM) Sheriff's Management	31	1	3.2%
Public Defender Association of San Diego County	(PD) Public Defender	163	1	0.6%
	(PM) Public Defender Management	117	0	0.0%
San Diego County Probation Officers' Association	(PO) Probation Officer	707	34	4.8%
San Diego Deputy County Counsels Association	(CC) Deputy County Counsel	1	0	0.0%
	(CS) Senior Deputy County Counsel	101	4	4.0%
San Diego County Supervising Probation Officers' Association	(SO) Supervising Probation Officers	80	0	0.0%
Teamsters Local 911	(CM) Construction, Maintenance, Operations, and Repair	388	49	12.6%
	(CR) Crafts	252	0	0.0%

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Union Name	Bargaining Unit	Budgeted positions	Vacant Positions	Vacancy Rate
Classified Unrepresented	(CE) Confidential Employee	406	32	7.9%
	(CEM) Confidential Employee Management	1,002	24	2.4%
	(MGT) Management	1,378	66	4.8%
Unclassified		664	48	7%
	Total	20,477	1,226	6%

** A negative vacancy rate is reflected when positions are temporarily overfilled due to workforce transition activities, such as retirement from County service, to allow sufficient training and overlap period for succession planning.*

Recruitment Strategies and Challenges

The Department of Human Resources (DHR), in collaboration with hiring departments, conducted 706 recruitments in the preceding one-year period, receiving 82,399 applications from interested job seekers. The County hired 1,673 new employees and promoted 2,503 County employees. DHR attended 98 outreach and recruitment events connecting with diverse communities throughout the San Diego region. In addition, DHR held 43 Same-Day Hiring events, where candidates received conditional job offers and background checks the same-day they were interviewed, allowing for a reduced time to begin employment. 404 job candidates accepted offers at these Same-Day hiring events.

While the overall vacancy and retention rates have been positive, the County is not immune to recruiting and hiring challenges in industries that are experiencing national shortages of labor, including engineering, nursing, medical examiners, and licensed behavioral health and sworn public safety professionals. DHR recognizes the ongoing challenges in filling these critical roles and remains committed to innovative and proactive strategies in collaboration with hiring departments. Ongoing efforts include expanding outreach, leveraging relationships with schools that produce professionals in these industries, collaborating with professional membership organizations, resume searches in national databases and bringing forth compensation adjustment requests as necessary throughout the fiscal year.

In an effort to mitigate these hiring challenges, in September 2022, your Board approved various incentives for hard-to-recruit classifications including the Lateral Incentive Program, Hard-to-Recruit Bonus Program, an employee referral program and enhanced relocation reimbursement for Deputy Sheriffs and Deputy Probation Officers, which have yielded the successful hiring of essential personnel. Additional incentives the Board approved include a 5% premium applied to

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the Civil Engineer series for those holding a California Professional Engineer license, a 10% premium applied to Sheriff's Detentions nursing and mental health classifications and a 5% Night Shift premium for Deputy Sheriffs.

Retention Strategies

The County's overall retention rate for the period of March 7, 2024, to March 7, 2025, is 92%. The Gallup Organization recommends targeting a retention rate of 90% or higher, which the County has exceeded. Healthy turnover is needed for all organizations to progress by bringing together diverse perspectives and new skillsets and supporting career growth opportunities.

A skilled and diverse workforce is the foundation of providing services to the communities served in San Diego, and creating a sense of belonging for employees is at the forefront of the County's culture. Key elements to increasing retention of the County workforce include, maintaining career paths so that employees have a career ladder and opportunities for growth in the organization, leveraging teleworking and alternate working schedules to ensure employees have optimal work/life balance where feasible, and engaging with employees directly, and through their recognized employee associations, about how to make improvements to the organization.

In summary, the County has made significant strides in its efforts to fill vacant positions and recruit and retain a skilled, diverse, and engaged workforce. These efforts have reduced the overall vacancy rate from a high of nearly 20% in July of 2022 to a low of 6% in March 2025. In the upcoming fiscal years each County operational group will take measured steps to monitor vacancies and will ensure core services are delivered to the public.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

These actions are aligned with the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Initiatives of Sustainability, Community, Justice, Equity, and Empower. Approval of the recommendation allows the County to develop, maintain, and attract a skilled, adaptable, and diverse workforce dedicated to sustaining operational excellence and serving as enablers of these strategic initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,



EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A