



Mendocino County
Department of Social Services
Healthy People, Healthy Communities

DeNeese Parker, Director
Stephen White, Assistant Director



Memorandum

Date:	April 27, 2026
To:	Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
From:	Department of Social Services
Subject:	Request for Authorization to Fill Budgeted Vacant Positions- BU 5170

Please accept this memorandum as justification for the request to authorize the Department of Social Services to fill budgeted vacant positions necessary to maintain critical services and preserve operational stability. Specifically, the Department seeks approval to fill two vacated Social Worker Assistant (SWA) I/II positions within the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority (PA) Unit in the Adult and Aging Services Division. These vacancies were created through one employee promotion to a Social Worker I position and one employee resignation, leaving significant workload and service gaps within the unit.

Funding Source

These positions are funded through a combination of the Public Authority Allocation, 1991 Realignment funds, and reimbursement through County Expense Claiming in support of IHSS programs. Both positions are already budgeted and were filled at the time of submission of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget. No additional County General Fund allocation is being requested.

A Social Worker Assistant Step 3 is approximately \$39,140.00 and with benefits \$78,371.00. The total costs to fill two (2) full-time positions would be approximately \$156,742.00.

Operational Impact of the Vacancies

These positions are critical to the daily functioning of the IHSS Public Authority Unit. Core responsibilities include:

- Processing IHSS provider applications
- Conducting background checks for prospective providers
- Interviewing providers for placement on the IHSS provider registry
- Coordinating orientation for new IHSS providers
- Supporting provider recruitment and registry operations

Currently, these duties are being absorbed by the Public Authority Supervisor and existing staff, all of whom already maintain full workloads while also performing state-mandated IHSS Quality Assurance functions. Continued vacancies will result in delays in provider application processing, slower registry approvals, and reduced capacity to meet mandated services pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 12301.3 and 12301.6.

Workload Distribution and Service Risk

Current staffing levels are insufficient to fully absorb the duties associated with these vacancies. As a result, employees are being diverted from assigned responsibilities, and the

Public Authority Supervisor's ability to oversee required Quality Assurance activities is being significantly impacted. Prolonged understaffing increases the risk of service delays and diminished support to vulnerable elderly and disabled residents who rely on IHSS to remain safely in their homes.

Efficiency Measures

The Department has continuously sought operational efficiencies and has functioned with reduced staffing for an extended period. The unit has already been reduced by one position within the last two years as part of restructuring efforts focused on efficiency and sustainability. Additional vacancy-driven reductions are no longer operationally sustainable and will directly affect delivery.

Data and Metrics Supporting the Request

IHSS provider recruitment and timely approval remain a longstanding departmental priority. Many eligible IHSS recipients in Mendocino County have authorized service hours they are unable to utilize due to a shortage of available providers.

During Fiscal Year 2024-25, Public Authority staff:

- Processed approximately **800 new provider applications**
- Completed approximately **1,000 IHSS registry provider referrals**

IHSS is a vital program that enables elderly and disabled individuals to remain in their homes and communities, helping to avoid more costly institutional placements such as skilled nursing facilities, which may exceed \$11,000 per month and often rely on state-funded programs.

Organizational Structure

An Adult and Aging Services Division organizational chart reflecting filled and vacant positions is attached for reference. The chart demonstrates current minimum staffing levels required to sustain services and reflects recent efforts to streamline operations.

Request

The Department respectfully requests authorization to fill all currently budgeted vacant positions necessary to maintain mandated services, operational efficiency, and fiscal stability, including the two vacant Social Worker Assistant I/II positions within the IHSS Public Authority Unit. Filling these already-funded positions will support vulnerable residents, sustain compliance, and prevent further service disruption without requiring additional County General Fund resources.

Thank you for your consideration.