

Item Title: Authorize Establishment of 1.00 Full-Time Equivalent Position Administrative Assistant in the County Attorney Child Protective Services Division Budget

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners authorizes the establishment of a 1.00 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position in the County Attorney Child Protective Services budget to serve as Administrative Assistant.

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners approves all authorized full-time positions.

Background: The Child Protective Services (CPS) team is a critical resource to the children of Wake County. The County Attorney's Office represents the County, specifically, Health and Human Services, in its CPS work.

Over the past year changes to processes, policies, and pandemic-impacted practice have increased the workload for the county attorneys, paralegals and support staff serving in Abuse, Neglect and Dependency Court. Additionally, the number of children entering custody has increased over the past two years while the number of children exiting custody is lower than normal.

The County Attorney's Office requests an additional administrative assistance position to support the CPS legal staff and the increasing workload. This position will manage access to CPS legal staff by screening calls and visitors to determine appropriate course of action, as well as research and respond to confidential inquiries. The work is sensitive in nature and ranges from general office support to more complex administrative responsibilities including handling court documents.

Board Goal: This action supports Community Health and Vitality Goal 3: Support a higher quality of life for vulnerable residents and communities.

Fiscal Impact: The FY 2022 expenditures related to this effort are estimated to be \$11,200. These expenditures can be accommodated through realignment of the current year budget of the County Attorney department. The ongoing annual costs for this position will be incorporated into the recommended operating budget for FY 2023.

Additional Information:

The table below provides some data on the growing workload. The number of children entering custody has increased over the past two years while the number of children exiting custody is lower than the number entering. Calendar Year 2022 is trending to be a record-breaking year.

Data Point	CY20	CY21	CY22 YTD
# Petitions Granted	160	204	39
# Served	555	589	461

With changes in the laws like the new Indian Child Welfare Act, processes were modified resulting in increased requirements and documentation for every child entering and remaining in custody of the county.

There are new judges rotating in and out of Abuse, Neglect, Dependency Court adding complexity and increased demands of the staff. To support this increased workload an additional CPS Attorney joined the team March 14, 2022. The previous administrative assistant was promoted to Paralegal and supports the new Attorney on staff.

Due to the critical nature of the work this team does, this position was determined to be a high priority need for the department and is requested outside of the budget development process.

The addition of this Administrative Assistant position will allow the legal staff to focus on representing Wake County Human Services and the children of Wake County.

Attachments:

1. Budget Memo