



State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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JEFFREY A. MEYERS
COMMISSIONER

August 26, 2019

The Honorable Donna M. Soucy
State House, Room 302
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

The Honorable Stephen J. Shurtleff
State House, Room 311
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: Hiring Under SB 6

Dear President Soucy and Speaker Shurtleff:

I am writing in response to questions raised about the status of the positions created by Senate Bill 6 (SB 6) and to inform the Legislature of the efforts the Department has taken to hire Child Protective Service Workers (CPSWs) into the SB 6 positions. These new positions are critical for the State to meet capacity needs as identified by the December 19, 2016 Independent Quality Assurance Review of DCYF. As of today, the Department has filled three SB 6 positions – one supervisor position and two CPSW positions – with additional hires in process due to the recruitment efforts described below. The Department is committed to filling the positions with qualified personnel as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Creation of the New CPSW Positions

On June 6, 2019, the Governor signed Senate Bill 6. The bill made an appropriation to DHHS to hire 57 Child Protective Service Worker (CPSW) positions and 20 CPSW Supervisor positions to DCYF's workforce over the biennium. The funding for 27 CPSW and 9 CPSW Supervisor positions was available as of July 1, 2019, with funding for the remaining positions beginning July 1, 2020.

Immediately after the bill was signed into law, DCYF undertook an analysis of district office caseloads and current capacity of each office in order to determine which offices had the greatest need for additional CPSWs and supervisors. That process was completed on June 19, 2019. In addition, DHHS worked with Division of Personnel (DoP), to revise the qualifications of the CPSW positions in order to allow for a broader pool of applicants with experience working directly with children and families.

The Department then initiated the administrative process where DoP assigns a position number, creates the new position in the State system, and identifies the district office and supervisor the position is assigned to. That process was completed on July 16, 2019 for the 27 CPSW positions.

CPSW Recruitment Efforts and Strategies

While DHHS could not hire personnel into the new positions prior to the July 16, 2019 – the date DoP completed its administrative process – DHHS took immediate steps after passage of SB 6 to ramp up its recruitment and hiring efforts in anticipation of the new openings.

One goal was to accelerate the administrative process involved in posting and filling open positions so the Department may efficiently fill all positions created by SB 6, as well as to backfill positions that open due to promotions, retirements and other events leading to resignations. Shortly after the passage of SB 6, in June 2019, DHHS worked with DoP to accomplish this by developing a new and more efficient “master posting” strategy. This revised process allows a master posting for CPSW positions to remain open as positions are filled on a continuing basis rather than requiring a separate process for each individual position. In addition to streamlining the administrative aspect of the hiring process, master posting eliminates barriers to considering applicants for multiple positions simultaneously, and avoids requiring individuals to apply separately for each of the CPSW positions he or she is interested in. On July 15, 2019, DHHS began entering the mass recruitment job postings to Lawson, the State’s employment website. That process was completed July 16, 2019. While DCYF was prepared to post these positions on July 8, 2019, the date Lawson was back online after annual scheduled maintenance, a technical problem, which prevented the external postings of State positions, was not resolved until July 15, 2019.

DHHS also initiated a centralized structured interview process to evaluate candidates for CPSW positions open throughout the state. These “Job Fests” reduce duplication of effort by the candidates and district offices. DHHS held its first Job Fest on June 13, 2019. Sixty-five certified CPSW applicants were invited; 27 participated and 15 were selected for second interviews. As result of the event, to date DHHS hired three candidates – two CPSWs began working in early July and the third began last week. Three applicants declined offers of employment and three candidates are still under consideration as DHHS completes reference requests and the candidates comply with any outstanding application requirements. Because these recruitment efforts were initiated before the Department could technically fill SB 6 positions, each of the offers arising out of the June 13th event was for an existing vacant CPSW positions within the Division.

Since July 16, 2019, DHHS has focused its recruitment efforts on filling the SB 6 positions. In August, DCYF held two events. On August 2, 2019, given its relative size and caseloads, the Manchester District Office held an office-specific Job Fest with eight participants attending. Pending completion of administrative processing the Department anticipates offering four of the participants positions – each for positions created by SB 6.

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On August 13, 2019, DHHS held a second state-wide Job Fest. Fifty-five certified CPSW applicants were invited and seventeen participated. While information from the participants is still being processed, DHHS has recommended twelve candidates for consideration for employment to the Office Supervisors. Each of these candidates are being considered for positions created by SB 6. DHHS plans to hold similar events on a monthly basis. DHHS has scheduled the next Job Fest for September 10, 2019.

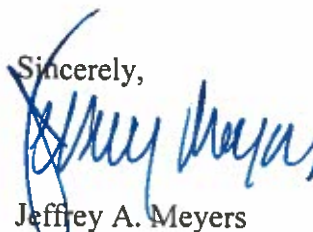
District offices supervisors continue office specific efforts as well, resulting in the hiring of two SB 6 CPSW positions earlier this month. One CPSW begins work at the end of this month, with the other starting in early September.

DHHS has also increased its recruitment outreach. It has created a new CPSW recruitment poster and is using departmental social media, college job placement boards, and the UNH Social Work page to target potential candidates. The Department is planning a variety of in-person recruitment events, including a confirmed event with Granite State College, Office of Career Services.

As to the Supervisor positions, which are typically filled by internal candidates currently in CPSW positions, the internal posting closed on August 13, 2019. As of today's date, one supervisor position has been filled. Because these supervisors will result in new CPSW vacancies, DHHS prioritized hiring CPSWs to lessen the impact these promotions will have on the CPSW workforce.

DHHS is committed to filling the positions created by the Legislature with qualified candidates as quickly and efficiently as possible, as well as to fill all positions that become vacant due to promotions, resignations, or retirements.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Meyers
Commissioner