

SESA
Improve HR Investigations



2016 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

Request	FY16	FY17	15-17
FTE	0.0	6.0	3.0
GF-State	\$0	\$530,000	\$530,000
Total	\$0	\$645,000	\$645,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Services and Enterprise Support Administration (SESA) requests funding to support 6 (six) full-time investigators. By funding this request, SESA is expected to reduce the average time to open, conduct and close employee investigations to 30 days or fewer.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conducting fair, thorough and timely internal employee investigations is a critical function to ensure our employees meet the highest ethical and professional standard of conduct. DSHS investigates more than 500 complaints of employee behavior or performance per year. Employees are often assigned alternate work duties during investigations, requiring backfill or substitution, costing valuable program dollars. Completing investigations and returning staff to their regular job assignments, or taking timely and defensible corrective action, is of highest priority to preserve program funding and remove or reassign employees whose behavior or performance cannot be corrected.

Recent legislation directed at Childrens' Administration (Aiden's Act, Ch. 298, L. 2015) requires After Action Review processes for all child-fatalities and near-fatalities be complete within 180 days from occurrence, **including** any employee investigation required.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Funding will provide 6 staff members who are trained investigators, dedicated to that singular purpose, centrally managed and available to conduct, support or consult on any investigative need.

The least effective solution is provided by a team of 3 dedicated investigators to augment the existing team of Civil Rights investigators. That team of 3 does not have the capacity to assume responsibility for conduct and performance investigations in addition to civil rights investigations. Six investigators, deployed statewide, provides optimal coverage and availability of investigative services and consultation. Ideally, six investigators would be hired at the same time, trained and oriented at the same time.



DSHS VISION

People are healthy • People are safe • People are supported • Taxpayer resources are guarded

DSHS MISSION

To transform lives

DSHS VALUES

Honesty and Integrity • Pursuit of Excellence • Open Communication • Diversity and Inclusion • Commitment to Service

EXPECTED RESULTS

Employee investigations will be completed within 30 calendar days by trained and qualified professionals. Costs associated with alternate work assignments for employees who are subjects of investigation will be reduced.

More than half of DSHS internal investigations depend on program staff. These staff do not regularly conduct investigations and schedule investigatory work secondary to regular duties, protracting the completion of investigations. Since nearly all cases investigated involve placing employees into alternate work assignments which results in customer- or patient-focused employees working for long periods of time in kitchens, laundries, or performing clerical work while paid at higher rates of pay. Programs have to fill behind them with non-perms or overtime until/if they can return to regular duty, resulting in unanticipated expenses. In addition, these delays cause irreparable damage to the morale and disruption of work units. The existing Human Resources Investigations Unit (IU), responsible for conducting civil rights investigations, also assumes complex employee misconduct cases as staff resources are available. The unit is currently staffed with three full-time investigators, each averaging 7-10 cases (not including consultations, triaging, and reviewing investigative reports from program staff.) The IU completes employee investigations in 12 to 30 days, whereas the average length of time for investigations conducted by program staff is currently is 48 days.

In 2015, Aiden's Act (Ch. 298, L. 2015) enacted a requirement that fatalities and near fatalities involving enrolled children be investigated, including a required employee investigation if circumstances dictated. The investigations are not new, however the Act imposes a 180 time limit on the entire after action review, including any employee investigation. Brevity is key to compliance. The objective is to have all employee investigations complete in 30 days or fewer.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

The Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds testimony on Aiden's Act would support this decision package.