

**EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
2008-2009 COST SAVINGS SUGGESTIONS**

Summary

The Employment and Human Services Department has solicited and reviewed almost 400 “cost savings suggestions” from its employees. To date, 31 of these have been implemented in full or part. Another 39 are under serious consideration. Over \$621,000 in savings has been realized in the current fiscal year and were factored into the reductions the Department has taken to date. An additional \$132,000 is projected to be realized from adoption, most of this also in the current fiscal year.

Background

In October of 2008, EHSD agreed to a recommendation from its five labor organizations to form a joint “Labor-Management Cost Savings Task Force” as part of a strategy to prepare for pending budget cuts. The goal of the task force was to solicit suggestions from staff that would either reduce costs or increase the efficiency of work processes. A “Zoomerang” survey was sent out to all 1,700 of the department’s employees soliciting their suggestions. Almost 400 specific suggestions were received. The Task Force reviewed them and identified which ones merited further examination. Department managers reviewed the feasibility as well as cost savings or workload savings potential of those the Task Force identified. Several had already been implemented, and others were implemented as part of the December budget reductions which the Department took.

To date, 31 of the suggestions have been implemented in full or part. Another 39 are under serious consideration. Over \$621,000 in savings have been realized in the current fiscal year and were factored into the reductions the Department has already taken. An additional \$132,000 in savings are projected to be realized from adoption of the others, most of this also in the current fiscal year. Although some of the suggestions would only yield one-time savings, continuation of the practices suggested by some of the others will yield additional cost savings in the 09-10 Fiscal Year and beyond. The Task Force continues to meet to review the status of implementation of adopted suggestions and suggestions still under study. Task Force members also continue to propose additional cost savings ideas to explore.

The suggestions that have been accepted for adoption for which specific cost savings have been identified are summarized below. Following this list is a sample of some of the other suggestions which have been adopted for which there is as yet no cost savings estimate or are still under study. In addition, Department managers have also implemented a number of additional projects to reduce costs, maximize state and federal revenue, or improve the efficiency of work processes. Some of these are listed at the end.

**Adopted Costs Savings Suggestions
Savings Identified**

Suggestion	Savings Already Taken	Additional Savings to be Taken
Reduce janitorial services by 10% including reduction in grounds maintenance.	\$117,090	
Discontinue client newsletter: "Opportunity Knocking"	\$60,000	
Eliminate the "General Assistance Hearing Officer" – transfer this responsibility to the G.A. Supervisors	\$90,058	
Eliminate county general funds from the contract for the "Welcome Home Baby" program [still receives First Five and Medi-Cal funds].	\$316,908	
Eliminate the "CalWIN" Help Desk Unit	\$37,000	
Prohibit overnight travel to out of county conferences unless cost is totally covered by non-county funds and there is a funder requirement or critical business reason.		\$24,000
Use recycled ink cartridges for printers.		\$30,000
Reduce IT Capital Projects and associated overtime		\$49,000
Solicit voluntary furloughs – 771 voluntary furlough hours were actually taken in December and January		\$23,000
Change the default margins on Word Documents from 1.25" to 1" [illustrated on this document].		\$5,000
Eliminate staff recognition events-"Breakfast at Joe's"		\$1,500
TOTAL	\$621,056	\$132,500

**Adopted Costs Savings Suggestions
Savings Not Yet Identified**

Review cell phone and Blackberry usage. Assign cell phones and Blackberries only to those staff for which there is a demonstrated business need.
Implement an automated recording for clients calling the offices that would let clients know when the office is closed and provide them with information on the correct number to call for various services.
Maximize the use of the Department's "Polycom" remote broadcasting Equipment" for both training and meetings.
Continue to accept requests for voluntary furloughs.
Replace fleet vehicles with hybrid vehicles [will occur as vehicles come up for replacement].
Check the irrigation system at 1650 Cavallo Road in Antioch.

Examples of Cost Savings Suggestions Under Consideration

- Make the default printer setting for all documents two-sided. Although this can't be done with many of the prescribed state forms we use, all staff have been encouraged to use 2-sided printing whenever possible.
- Recycle unused forms in the intake packets for public assistance applications.
- Create a web portal so clients can access forms on-line.
- Create a work room for Social Workers at Juvenile Court so that they can work on other tasks while waiting for their case to come up. We're currently exploring assigning them lap tops so they can do other work while waiting.
- Stop buying individual desk printers. Require all users to print to network printers.
- Be more aggressive in pricing out contracts. Compare fees paid by non-government agencies.
- Establish one phone number for client complaints.

Management Initiated Business Improvement Projects

- Provide intensive training to all supervisors and staff on using the appropriate codes to record those activities that qualify for maximum state and federal funding [completed].
- Upgrade the department's phone system so that clients can access information about their benefits through an Interactive Voice Response system.
- Review the reception processes in EHSD offices to identify changes in procedures that will better handle the increasingly larger numbers of persons coming in to apply for assistance. Preliminary research has already been conducted looking at some of the systems which the Department of Motor Vehicles has put in place
- Maximize the use of the increased Medi-Cal allocation to add positions which can be fully funded from this allocation.
- Improve the review of Foster Care Eligibility determinations to ensure all foster children eligible for federal reimbursement are identified.
- Integrate "General Assistance" staff with CalWorks staff to provide more flexibility in backing up application processing tasks.
- Explore the feasibility of sending CalWIN print jobs directly to the department's electronic document management system – CaseStars – so that documents don't have to be first printed out then manually scanned into CaseStars.