COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/14/2026

File #: 26-217

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Clerk/Recorder

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

SUBJECT:
Accelerated Salary Step Advancement Request for Election Specialist II Position (4/5 Vote Required)

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve an accelerated salary step advancement for Election Specialist II (Salary Range 376), Kiara Ford, in Budget Unit 140 from Salary Step "B" to Salary Step "E" effective the pay period immediately following approval. (4/5 Vote Required)

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Workforce & Operational Excellence
Strategic Plan Category: 3003 - Enhance employee recruitment and retention

DISCUSSION:
Staff request approval to adjust the salary for Kiara Ford, Election Specialist II, to $25.26 hourly, corresponding to Step E, Range 376.

Kiara Ford joined the Humboldt County Office of Elections on July 8, 2024, as an Election Specialist II. Bringing significant prior elections experience, Ms. Ford bypassed the standard learning curve for this specialized classification, demonstrating a mastery of election administration that allowed her to be fully operational during the high-pressure November 2024 Presidential Election cycle.

Since her appointment, Ms. Ford has transitioned into a de facto lead capacity, providing technical oversight and high-level mentorship to both permanent staff and hundreds of temporary Election Workers. Her ability to navigate complex California Elections Code requirements and ensure state-mandated compliance has been instrumental in maintaining the integrity of the county's democratic processes.

Ms. Ford's professional contributions are further enhanced by her completion of a Master of Science degree in May 2025. She has successfully leveraged this advanced academic background to implement data-driven process improvements and technical workflows that have increased the efficiency of office operations.

Due to her advanced education, demonstrated mastery of the Election Specialist II series, and the critical need to retain her institutional knowledge for the upcoming 2026 election cycles, the Office of Elections recommends an advanced salary step placement to Step E of Range 376.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
General Fund Contribution to - Elections (1100-140)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (1100-140)	FY25-26	FY26-27 Projected*	FY27-28 Projected*
Budgeted Expenses (Salaries and Benefits)	2,829,490.00	2,162,823.00	1,986,206.00
Additional Appropriation RequestedExpenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenditures	2,829,490.00	2,162,823.00	1,986,206.00

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Funding Sources (Fund, Budget Unit1100-140)	FY25-26	FY26-27 Projected*	FY27-28 Projected*
General Fund	1,763,053.00	1,851,206.00	1,851,206.00
State/Federal Funds	895,437.00	186,617.00	0.00
Fees/Other	171,000.00	125,000.00	135,000.00
Use of Fund Balance	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contingencies	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Funding Sources	2,829,490.00	2,162,823.00	1,986,206.00

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:
The existing budgeted Salaries & Employee Benefits are sufficient to cover this step increase and would not require any adjustments. This is due to the multiple vacancies for extended periods within the Election Specialist positions in the 25/26 fiscal year.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:
There is no impact to staffing due to this action.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
None.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board may choose to deny staff's recommendations. However, this alternative is not recommended as appropriate staffing may be lost and the retainment of qualified exceptional staff would be at a loss.

ATTACHMENTS:
1. Masters Degree - Kiara Ford
2. 2024-07-08-2024-01-14 EVAL F1285 Ford, K

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: N/A
File No.: N/A