



Lori A. Weaver
Commissioner

Marie Noonan
Director

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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August 25, 2026

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 99:8, Increases for Recruitment Purposes, and in accordance with Per 905.01 of the Rules of the Division of Personnel, Request for Temporary Increase, authorize the Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Children, Youth and Families, to implement a temporary recruitment and retention wage enhancement for Youth Counselor classifications, Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers, and the immediate supervisory classifications supporting these positions, effective upon the first day of the first pay period following Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2027. 10% Federal funds.90% General funds.

The requested increase represents a one-band increase, equivalent to an approximately five-percent enhancement for each employee impacted. Implementation will be carried out through work units processed by the Division of Personnel, ensuring that the one-band increase is applied consistently for all eligible staff. Each employee will receive notification regarding the temporary increase. This action affects 138 positions within the Youth Counselor and Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer classifications is as follows:

Health and Human Services Count of Positions Affected by this Action			
05-95-42-421510-6643 SYSC		05-95-42-421410-7905 JUVENILE FILED SERVICES	
Position	Count	Position	Count
21-1010 COUNSELORS-1	2	21-1090 MISC SOC SVC SPECS-3	1
21-1010 COUNSELORS-2	3	21-1090 MISC SOC SVC SPECS-4	6
21-1010 COUNSELORS-3	46	21-1090 MISC SOC SVC SPECS-5	14
21-1010 COUNSELORS-6	7	21-1090 MISC SOC SVC SPECS-6	58
21-1020 SOCIAL WKRS-5	1		
<u>Total</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>79</u>

**05-95-042-421510-66430000 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH
AND HUMAN SVCS DEPT, HHS: DIV CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAM, SUNUNU
YOUTH SERVICES CENTER, SYSC**

Account/Class	Class Title	Amount Requested
010-500100	Personal Services - Perm Class	\$ 350,784
050-500109	Personal Service Temp	\$ 10,425
060-500601	FICA (Perm)	\$ 22,395
060-500604	Employees' Retirement (Perm)	\$ 52,484
060-500631	Medicare (Perm)	\$ 5,238
Subtotal		\$ 441,326

**05-95-042-421410-79050000 HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH
AND HUMAN SVCS DEPT, HHS: DIV CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAM, JUVENILE
JUSTICE SERVICES, JUVENILE FIELD SERVICES**

Account/Class	Class Title	Amount Requested
010-500100	Personal Services - Perm Class	\$ 504,704
060-500601	FICA (Perm)	\$ 31,292
060-500604	Employees' Retirement (Perm)	\$ 73,333
060-500631	Medicare (Perm)	\$ 7,318
Subtotal		\$ 616,647
Total		\$ 1,057,973

EXPLANATION

This request is necessary to stabilize a critical staffing shortage among the Division for Children Youth and Families (DCYF) Youth Counselors and the impact this shortage has on the Juvenile Justice workforce. The goal of the temporary recruitment and retention wage enhancement is to attract and retain the minimum staffing levels necessary to protect the safety and well-being of both the youth served by the Sununu Youth Services Center (SYSC) and the employees responsible for their care, treatment, supervision, and community support. SYSC operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and requires a minimum of three shifts of consistent, trained workforce capable of maintaining a safe and structured treatment environment. Youth Counselor positions are particularly critical because they provide the direct supervision of youth while also supporting their treatment, behavioral stabilization, and rehabilitation.

As of July 2026, SYSC has 46 funded Youth Counselor positions, of which 37 are filled and 9 are vacant, representing a vacancy rate of approximately 19.6%. More significantly, of the 37 filled positions, only 29 Youth Counselors were available for duty, which constrained the facility's capacity to maintain adequate coverage. Staffing shortages are most acute from Friday second shift through Monday first shift, when the Department has the greatest difficulty maintaining necessary coverage. With limited staff, the Department risks being unable to safely respond to incidents, maintain normal programming, and provide the level of direct supervision and engagement required within a secure treatment environment.

To maintain 24/7 operations despite these shortages, DCYF now relies on mandatory overtime among SYSC staff and other areas of the juvenile justice workforce. In addition to SYSC Youth Counselors, Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers (JPPOs) and Supervisors are currently mandated to work additional hours at SYSC. When JPPOs and Supervisors provide facility coverage, it reduces their availability to perform community supervision, court, case management, family engagement, and other responsibilities associated with their regular assignments. Immediate supervisors are similarly affected, as they must continually coordinate staffing, respond to coverage gaps and incidents, provide operational oversight, and, when necessary, directly support facility operations. The staffing challenges at SYSC therefore extend beyond the Youth Counselor classification and increasingly affect the Division's ability to sustain both facility-based and community-based juvenile justice operations.

The Department is actively recruiting to fill existing vacancies and reclassified 8 additional positions into Youth Counselor positions, created 10 new, temporary full-time positions. Recruitment alone, however, does not solve the immediate critical staffing shortage. Newly hired Youth Counselors must complete 20 hours of on-site and virtual training followed by two weeks of supervised shadowing before they may independently perform the duties of the position. The Division has also established contract staffing capacity on an ad hoc basis; however, contract staff are intended to supplement immediate and temporary operational needs and cannot replace the continuity, experience, institutional knowledge, and treatment relationships provided by a stable State workforce. Recruitment of new staff to fill vacancies and retention of seasoned staff must be addressed through coordinated strategies that build a reliable, experienced team for the long-term.

In evaluating the recruitment and retention challenges associated with these positions, the Department conducted a high-level comparison of the Youth Counselor role with the Corrections Officer I classification at the Department of Corrections. The positions share significant responsibilities related to safety, security, direct supervision, emergency response, and maintaining order within a secure environment. There is, however, an important distinction. Youth Counselors are working with children and adolescents in a juvenile justice treatment environment and must perform these security responsibilities while also applying trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and treatment-focused practices. Youth Counselors are expected not only to maintain safety and security, but also to build appropriate relationships with youth, recognize behavioral and emotional needs, support treatment objectives, use de-escalation techniques, and contribute to rehabilitation and successful outcomes. This combination of security and treatment responsibilities increases the complexity of the position and is an important consideration in the Department's determination that an enhancement is necessary to competitively recruit and retain this workforce.

Insufficient staffing directly impacts the youth served at SYSC. When staffing is limited, the facility must reduce activities that require additional staff coverage, including community programming and time in common areas. These restrictions reduce opportunities for exercise, constructive engagement, relationship-building, and appropriate outlets for youth energy. In some circumstances, reduced activity and increased restrictions can contribute to dysregulation and may result in increased behavioral incidents. Adequate staffing therefore supports not only facility security, but also the Department's ability to maintain the structured, trauma-informed treatment environment necessary to safely serve youth.

The requested enhancement for Youth Counselors, JPPOs, and the immediate supervisory classifications is intended to strengthen recruitment and retention of youth serving roles, reduce the Department's reliance on mandatory overtime and cross-program staffing, and establish a more stable staffing model. Should the Governor and Council not authorize this request, DCYF will continue relying on mandatory overtime, Juvenile Justice staffing support, supervisory coverage, and contract staffing while operating with an insufficient Youth Counselor workforce.

Area served: Statewide.

Source of Federal Funds: Assistance Listing #93.659 2601NHADPT; ALN #93.658 2601NHFOST; ALN #93.472 2601NHPSGP; ALN #10.561 264NH403S2514; ALN #93.778 2605NH5ADM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori A. Weaver".

for:

Lori A. Weaver
Commissioner



State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

DIVISION OF PERSONNEL

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Charles M. Arlinghaus

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Director

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August 25, 2026

Johnna Lorry
Department of Health and Human Services
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH, 03301

RE: Enhancement Request

Ms. Lorry,

I have received your letter dated August 25, 2026, requesting a temporary recruitment and retention wage enhancement for Youth Counselor classifications, Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers, and the immediate supervisory classifications supporting these positions, effective upon the first day of the first pay period following Governor and Council approval through June 30, 2027.

Based on my review of your letter, I am recommending that the requested temporary recruitment and retention wage enhancement be approved.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew G. Mavrogeorge", is written over a horizontal line.

Matthew G. Mavrogeorge
Director, Division of Personnel