

Update on the Proposed Governor's Budget for Fiscal Year 2003-04

Summary

As of July 11, 2003, the Commission's portion of the 2003-04 Governor's Budget had been approved by the budget committees in both houses of the Legislature and is supported by the Governor. The ability to access these funds will of course depend upon when the budget is approved by both the full Senate and Assembly and is signed by the Governor. As new developments occur during the budget process, staff will provide Commissioners with an update regarding the status of the Commission's proposed budget at the Commission meeting.

While the 2003-04 Budget Act has not yet been enacted, the Governor has already implemented administrative procedures to further to reduce expenditures statewide by reducing staffing costs and eliminating vacant positions. This item details current and impending reductions in Commission services that have resulted from the nearly ten percent personnel reductions since July 2002.

Fiscal Impact

The reduction of 7.75 positions will result in the loss of funding associated with these positions.

Policy Issues to Be Resolved

This item is for informational purposes only.

Background

On July 1, 2003, the Governor issued two Executive Orders (EOs) to reduce fiscal year 2003-04 statewide expenditures. EO D-70-03, extends the statewide hiring freeze for an additional two fiscal years and EO D-71-03, abolishes all positions that were vacant on June 30, 2003. Pursuant to the provisions of EO D-71-03, it appears that the Commission will lose 7.75 positions that were vacant on June 30, 2003.¹ These positions are in addition to the 10.5 positions that were lost on July 1, 2002, as required by Control Section 31.60 of the 2002 Budget Act.²

While the Commission has been able to accommodate the vacancies resulting from the hiring freeze on a short-term basis, the additional July 2003 permanent personnel reductions coupled with the positions lost in July 2002, will severely reduce service levels as the Commission is already under staffed based on current workload. Outlined below is the impact of these reductions on the various programmatic divisions.

Certification, Assignments and Waivers Division (CAW)

The impact of personnel reductions is most immediately evident in CAW as the Division serves as the primary link to our credential applicants and holders. CAW's primary responsibilities are to evaluate credential applications, answer the phones, and respond to e-mail. The CAW Division has 34 positions devoted to completing these duties. Out of these 34 positions, three are currently vacant, one is expected to be vacant by July 14th and two positions are devoted to the TCSIP project. When reviewing the amount of staff time available to perform the duties mentioned above and the amount of time it takes to

¹ 7.75 positions: (4) from the Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division, (2.75) from the Professional Services Division and (1) from the Administration Division.

² 10.5 positions: (3) from the Division of Professional Practices, (2.5) from the Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division, (2) from the Professional Services Division and (3) from the Administrative Division.

complete these duties, there is not sufficient staff to fully meet the Unit's responsibilities. The charts below detail CAW Divisions staffing and associate workload.

Classification	Positions	Hours Per Month	Monthly Duties	Hours Per Month
Program Technician II	5	625	Evaluate Applications	2,866
Staff Services Analyst	24	3,000	Phones	990
AGPA	5	625	Front Office	220
Total	34	4,250	E-mail	458
SSA vacant/TCSIP	6	-750	Training	300
Total without SSA		3,500	Other	300
			Total	5,134
			Available Monthly Hours	3,500
			Short	-1,634

The impact of the July 2002 staffing reductions and extended vacancies is clearly evident in looking at the workload status. On June 30, 2002 there were 25,749 applications to be processed, with a processing time of approximately 67 days. The impact of the July 2002 reduction, coupled with the vacancies that resulted from the hiring freeze, has resulted in 51,905 applications to be processed in June 30, 2003, with a processing time of approximately 80 days.

Workload	June 29, 2003	June 28, 2002
Applications to be Processed	51,905	25,749
Application Processing Time	80 Days	67 Days

Given the reduced staffing levels it would appear appropriate for the CAW Division to further prioritize service levels in order to fulfill its main responsibility for processing credentials. Therefore, the following priorities have been identified for the 2003.04 fiscal year:

1. Evaluate credential applications. There is a regulatory requirement to process applications within 75 days and we should try to meet that requirement when it is possible.
2. Training. There are currently 15 staff members in some form of training. While training was postponed in the past to meet the 75-day processing requirement, CAW Division can no longer afford to have staff who are not fully trained. The lack of fully trained staff further restricts management's flexibility to assign where the workload demands staff.
3. Answer the phones.
4. Respond to e-mail within 72 hours.

Guided by these priorities CAW division will be implementing the following plan in order to bring available staff time in line with the Certification Unit's duties:

Action	Monthly Hours Saved	Implementation
Reduce the phone hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to 12 pm to 5 pm.	440	August 18, 2003
Reduce the front office hours to three days a week based on appointments.	396	September 1, 2003
Total	836	
Hours Short	1,634	
Short	798	

It is important to note that even with these reductions the Commission would still need 6 full-time positions to complete the as listed above. These initial reductions will be re-evaluated in the fall as CAW Division has the opportunity to evaluate workload and staff time in to determine if further reductions will be necessary.

Division of Professional Practices (DPP)

The loss of three positions in DPP, coupled with a continued growth in workload has severely impacted the core duties of the Division which include: supporting the disciplinary work of the Commission and the Committee of Credentials; investigating allegations of misconduct by credential holders; reviewing the fitness of applicants to hold credentials; providing legal support to the other program and administrative divisions of the agency; providing litigation support to the Office of Attorney General; and notifying the education community and employers of credential holders' or applicants' ineligibility to remain in the classroom.

During the past year, as a result of the loss of positions, DPP has instituted several process changes. Effective January 1, 2003 a policy was instituted to immediately reject all incomplete applications. This resulted in a decrease in workload and time spent by staff in keeping a file open while applicants completed submissions.

After consulting with the Committee of Credentials, DPP implemented a faster processing procedure for cases that are sent to the Division but after staff review are determined to be "not under" the jurisdiction of the Commission. The new procedure, implemented in September 2002, has already resulted in a 2-8 week improvement in review and processing time for such cases.

DPP staff has also implemented procedures to increase the number of cases it identifies as suitable for settlement prior to referral to the Attorney General's office for administrative hearing. This has resulted in a faster completion time for pending cases as well as a reduction in litigation support workload.

Even with these efficiencies, DPP faces an increased backlog. This is exacerbated by the increased processing time from CAW because files are not referred to DPP until after CAW has completed it's processing. As a result DPP is proposing that effective August 18, 2003 it reduce its telephone hours to 12-5pm. It will continue to respond to electronic mail requests in a timely manner. In the coming fiscal year, DPP will continue to look at opportunities to further streamline its processing functions.

Professional Services Division (PSD)

Staffing reductions within the Professional Services Division has resulted in the reduction and modification of activities in the areas of program review and accreditation. For example, the program review process was previously accomplished through multiple on-site meetings during which documents submitted by program sponsors were reviewed. This process has since been modified to provide for initial training and subsequent completion of reviews by mail and electronic communication. In addition, while in previous years, the Division has been able to provide extensive technical assistance on-site in the field, with fewer staff resources the Commission has adapted by scheduling the technical assistance sessions at the Commission office and inviting stakeholders to attend. This allows maximum interaction with limited resources.

Finally, as the Division considers the 2003-04 fiscal year, it is with the recognition that additional positions have been lost and the work previously done by those individuals will be assigned to others and overall, the work-plan for the Division will need to be further reduced accordingly. These reductions will further impact the ongoing accreditation process, standards implementation and the previously planned review of other credential areas such as Special Education.