



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

AGENDA: 6

Amendment to Staff Attorney Position Classification to Reduce Barriers to Recruiting

**Finance and Administration Committee Meeting
September 18, 2024**

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Presentation Outcome

- Overview of Environmental Justice (EJ) Law Fellowship Program
- Identify Need for Revision to Staff Attorney Class Specification
 - Create “Staff Attorney Trainee” specification to allow new graduates to start work while awaiting bar admission
- Request Committee Recommend Revision to Board of Directors

Requested Action

- Recommend to the Board of Directors an amendment to the “Staff Attorney” position classification to add a “Staff Attorney Trainee” level for recent law school graduates who want to begin work while awaiting their bar exam results and admission to practice

Fellowship Program Overview

- Two-year program for a new law graduate to work in the Air District's legal office focusing on equity and EJ-related issues
- **Benefits for Fellow:**
 - Experience working on EJ issues in a leading air quality regulatory agency
 - Competitive pay and benefits
 - Close mentorship
 - Potential for hire into permanent position if available
- **Benefits for Air District:**
 - Help with Legal Division's increasing Environmental Justice work
 - Bring new perspectives into the agency and the Legal Division
 - Develop next generation of EJ leaders
 - Valuable recruiting tool

Content of EJ Fellowship Program

- Examples of types of work Fellow may be assigned:
 - Support Assembly Bill (AB) 617 Community Emission Reduction Plan development
 - Legal work supporting Community Advisory Council (CAC)
 - Impact litigation in overburdened communities to enforce regulations against chronic violators
 - Implement initiatives to address cumulative impacts, disparate impact analyses, and other elements of civil rights compliance in the Air District permitting program
 - Draft California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) comments on projects proposed in overburdened communities
- Mentorship and Support:
 - Assignment of experienced attorney as a mentor
 - Individualized Development Plan (learning objectives and training plan)
 - Informal opportunities to build relationships with Air District staff and leadership

Program Timeline

Sept. - Nov. 2024	Publicize program and recruit applicants
Dec. 2, 2024	Application deadline
Dec. 2024	Screen applications
Jan. - Feb. 2025	Interviews and selections
Summer/Fall 2025	Fellow begins work
2025 - 2027	Two-year Fellowship term

Need for Staff Attorney Class Specification Revision

- Entry Level Classification is “Staff Attorney” (0-2 Years Experience)
- Current Staff Attorney Classification Requires Bar Admission
- Potential Applicants May Want To Start Work Before Admission
- Important to Support Candidates With Limited Financial Resources
- Standard Practice for Employers Hiring New Law Graduates
- Permissible As Long As New Hire Does Not Engage In Practice Of Law Until Admitted to Practice

Solution: Create “Staff Attorney Trainee” Specification

- Candidates Apply For Fellowship Program In 3rd Year of Law School
- Fellow Hired As Staff Attorney Trainee While Awaiting Bar Admission
- Fellow Works As Trainee, Gaining Knowledge Through Work Experience and Mentorship
- Fellow Promoted To Staff Attorney Upon Bar Admission And Successful Performance Of Duties As Trainee
- Must Obtain Bar Admission Within One Year Of Hire
- Creates pipeline of employment into Air District
 - Summer Legal Intern → Staff Attorney Trainee → Staff Attorney

Recommended Action

Staff Recommends the Committee:

- Recommend to the Board of Directors that the Board adopt the proposed amendments to the “Staff Attorney” position classification to add a “Staff Attorney Trainee” level for recent law school graduates who want to begin work while awaiting admission to practice