

BWSR MAPE Meet & Confer

Meeting Notes – July 22, 2024

Attendees: Annie Felix-Gerth, Matt Fischer, Andrea Fish, Justin Hanson, Steve Hofstad, Erin Loeffler, Suzanne Rhees, Patty Sweep, Dave Weirens

Discussion of student loan reimbursement policy request.

Patty – For a smaller agency, the funding just isn't there. Also, giving reimbursements to one bargaining unit, would you say no to the others? And it would be a lot of work for Fiscal to verify the request.

Andrea – We hadn't budgeted for it for this biennium; there have been internal questions as to whether we could make it work. If we did it section by section it would be inequitable – would depend on each section's funds.

Patty meets with all HR directors – have decided to let larger agencies do the pilot and then bring back to. None of the smaller agencies are doing this. Doesn't want to be the first.

Amie: has \$1,500 budgeted per person to do education. Could use those funds for PD, but if for loan reimbursement, BWSR would need more ADMO funding – can't use bonds, federal funds, etc. "ADMO" = Admin General Fund- based appropriation.

Annie – where is MPCA getting their funding? Justin: MPCA raises some funds through permitting, which we don't have.

What's the % of ADMO that BWSR receives compared to entire budget? – we are currently at 152 PCNs (staff positions) with a \$5.6M budget. Salaries now \$17M per year. ADMO covers all overhead.

Erin - What size of an agency would we need to be? How much increase in GF would we need?

Amie – hard to get our base budget as it stands now. Suggests that MAPE should advocate for add'l funds for smaller agencies. Our funding is too specialized; don't have enough sources to pick from.

Patty - Also with state changing requirements for 4-year degree, one can still achieve advancement. We do try to offer competitive wages so we can be competitive. Our turnover rate has slowed quite a bit; lots of good applicants.

Amie – that's why at least we have the \$1,500 for personal development, training, etc.

Note that the option is available in all the union contracts – not just MAPE.

Patty – it was understood that this would be a heavy lift for small agencies.

Erin - We'll go back to MNDOT and MPCA and figure out what kind of budget they have to support this initiative.

Next steps: Understanding how the \$1,500 per staff person can be used would be helpful. Will get Melissa, Amie, Patty together to discuss.

Matt: Does conference attendance come out of the same pot?

Amie: Some of it is part of your job description, so the \$1,500 is more for personal development.