

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Cook

Question: What would be the operational implications of further managing vacancies to achieve a target of a \$5 million reduction in personnel costs?

Response: A \$5 million reduction in personnel services budgets would be significant, increasing the current overall 8 percent budgeted position turnover to 8.6 percent. This 8 percent level is already an increase over historical levels, in many cases doubling the rate for some agencies. While the increases in position turnover were necessary to balance the budget in prior years, the ability of departments to meet their service delivery requirements has been impacted and further significant reductions in funding without commensurate reductions in service delivery expectations are not sustainable.

The Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Department of Family Services (DFS) and Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) make up more than 50 percent of the salary base supported by the General Fund so a proportional spread of a \$5 million increase in position turnover would have the largest impact on those agencies. Given the criticality of the functions, the increasing workloads in such areas as self-sufficiency and domestic violence and the already high budgeted rates for DFS and CSB, no further increase in position turnover is recommended for them.

If the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Department of Family Services and Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board were exempted, the remaining agencies would then be required to take even more significant reductions to reach \$5 million. As examples, the Department of Tax Administration (DTA), the Park Authority and the Fairfax County Public Library would each need to keep the equivalent of two more positions vacant the entire year. These three departments already have higher than average budgeted position turnover based on prior year budget reductions so increasing their rates would result in rates approaching 12 percent for DTA and Parks and assuming the same service requirements these levels of vacancies cannot be maintained.