

The Honorable Common Council
Finance & Personnel Committee
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Sir or Madam:

It was brought to my attention late last week that my position as Laboratory Assistant II in the Health Department may be cut from the 2006 Budget. As you may have guessed, the probability of this happening came as somewhat a shock. I have been employed with the Health Department since 1978, 11 of the years were in Nursing as a Clinical Assistant and most recently 15 years as a Laboratory Assistant .

My concern is two-fold. First , the prospect of becoming unemployed in the near future is frightening. Secondly, with all the outbreaks , viruses and communicable diseases as well as the large volume of glassware and medias needed, it is impracticaland probably impossible for one person to handle the position of Laboratory Assistant II alone.

There are only two Laboratory Assistant II in the Health Department. The other employee has 6 weeks vacation and the position must have back -up when she is unavailable for work. Or, will the lab support area close down temporarily to compensate the fact that the one position is on vacation?

I have attached a copy of my workload stats for your review and consider in making your decision. As you can see in just the first 6 months of the year 136.85 Liters of media were prepared, 1,921 bags of bio-hazard materials were picked up and autoclaved for disposal, 2,812 pieces of Chemistry glassware was washed and sterilized which does'nt include 9,542 pieces of glassware handle from the micro and virus lab. Also 212 kits were sent out for parasite related illness and this still does'nt include the other related work duties.

In closing, please consider the fact that 15 years ago when I began this job there were 4 and a half full-time positions needed to fill the high volume of activity in the lab. The number of positions were cut down to 2 positions some time ago and additional duties were added to the remaining positions. If nothing else, please consider the safety of the public in determining whether or not this position should be cut.

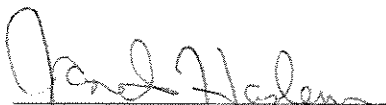
Sincerely yours,

Wanda Griffin
Laboratory Assistant II
414-286-5188

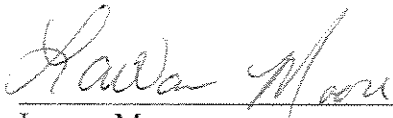
Daily Duties for Office Assistants in Vital Statistics:

- Proof Read 25-30 Death Certificates per day that have to be processed by 3:00pm
- Call Funeral Home for correction letters
- Make the corrections on the Death Certificates
- Expedite Death Certificates
- Weekly Mortality Report
- Requests for Death Certificates by fax
- Birth Certificates
- Birth Replacements
- Birth Adoptions
- Name Changes
- Legal names changes (Amendments)
- Customer service (face to face)
- Customer service to Funeral Directors
- Monthly Queries from Madison
- Birth Certificate Request thru the mail
- Daily Cash Reports
- Every Friday Death certificates that are out of town are sent to the County Registrar of Deeds
- Translate for Spanish speaking customers over the phone and in person
- Milwaukee County Courthouse has 8 workers for less work
- Health Department Vital Statistics has 3 workers and 2 managers, and if this position is cut then it will be 2 workers and 2 managers.

How can 2 staff members do this work and meet these deadlines?



Janet Haslem



Lawan Moore



Widalys Rivera

Dear Finance and Personnel Committee Member:

We are concerned about the proposal to eliminate an OA III from our office (Vital Statistics in the 2006 budget). The following is a description of duties that are done on a daily basis.

Proof reading of death records is time consuming and requires that the staff member working on that project remove themselves from counter duties. This leaves the remaining clerks to assist customers and handle all phone duties and outlining problems with customers that have lost loved ones or trying to get legal direction or obtain birth records.

Calls from funeral home for correction letters consist of looking up said document checking to see if it is currently filed or waiting for filing. If there is a correction needed, the State allows the Vital Statistics office to make corrections so that the families are not held up in taking care of business transactions.

Expedited services are for those that cannot wait for the daily processing of death records and need them right away over the counter, not to mention the service we provide the directors when they are shipping bodies out of the country that requires a special letter stating that the deceased is free of disease and that the body is safe to ship out of the country. This letter requires the Health Commissioner's signature.

The weekly Mortality Report is a report that is tallied daily showing how many death records were filed for that day and how many died of pneumonia or influenza. The outcome of this report is reported to the Center for Disease Control once a week and in, before each Tuesday of the following week.

Request for death certificates by fax require the look up of the records pulling books that are sometimes binded taking those books apart, making copies and sending them out or getting them ready for pickup by family members or Funeral Directors.

Birth Certificates, Replacements, Birth Adoptions and Name changes are all hands-on-jobs. See attached for each job.

Customer Service (face to face) consists of Funeral Directors coming to the office, dropping off death records, critiquing and helping them with the current record they are filing and answering questions regarding records that are already filed, records with "pending" status, or corrections that are made though the state on records that are already filed. We also assist customers with the help of paperwork such as Voluntary Paternity Forms, Legitimations, or any other form that are filed thru our State Bureau of Vital Records. To assist our customers we also answer questions regarding current birth records, errors, and assist parents with any questions on there child's birth record.

Monthly queries from Madison are inquiries the state has on Death records that have been processed and require a 10 day response from the funeral home and from the Vital Statistics office. This requires letters of correction faxed to Vital Statistics from the Funeral Home and forwarded to the state. If the queries are not answered in a timely manner they are sent to Vital Statistics again for a second time.

Birth Certificate requests through the mail fluctuate daily. Some days there are 20 pieces of mail or more. This job entails the opening of each letter, and making sure the correct fee is applied to each letter. Looking up the Birth Record, pulling of the Birth Certificate, making the copies requested on security paper, and certification being placed on the document. The request is then mailed, and each transaction is rung up separately on the register. The mail clerk, in addition to the mail, adds up all charges at the end of the day and is responsible for the cash reports that are done on a daily basis.