

Public Health Madison and Dane County: Seeks to bolster COVID-19 response with 19 new positions

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Public Health Madison & Dane County is looking to create 19 new positions to support the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery. The positions would be funded with \$5.8 million in federal and state grants intended for COVID response and critical public health infrastructure.

“Our department has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for over a year and a half and the pandemic is not going away anytime soon,” said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. “These new, multi-year positions are needed immediately to sustain the response over the near-, to mid-term, while also maintaining the ‘normal’ high level of programmatic services.”

The new positions will support the areas of disease control, testing, vaccination, compliance, operational planning and infrastructure, communications systems, recovery and resiliency, and preparedness capabilities. The positions would be funded through December 2024.

“The long term nature of this virus is taking a toll not only on health care workers in our hospitals but also our Public Health professionals,” County Executive Joe Parisi said. “To all of our chagrin, COVID-19 is here for the long haul. For the health and well-being of our community it’s imperative we have the resources needed for the work that’s still to come.”

“We’ve all learned how incredibly important our public health department is over the last year and a half,” said Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, “and we know we need them to keep responding to COVID-19. But we also need them to return to

their other work as well, and these positions will allow that.”

Since Public Health Madison & Dane County is a joint city-county agency, resolutions to authorize the new positions will need to be approved by both the Madison City Council and the Dane County Board. The first resolution will be introduced on Thursday, September 9 at the County Board meeting, while a companion resolution will be routed through the City approval process beginning with the Madison Common Council’s September 21 meeting.