



To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Fiona Velazquez, Fair & Events Manager

Through: Alex Murray, Director of Facilities

Re: Request to Create Part-Time Fair & Events Coordinator Position (0.5 FTE)

Date: February 9, 2026

Overview

This proposal requests approval to create a 0.5 FTE Fair & Events Coordinator position (Grade 119, Teamsters) within the Southwest Washington Fair & Fairgrounds Office.

The position addresses a demonstrated operational gap created by staffing reductions, increased event activity, and expanded year-round use of the fairgrounds. The primary focus of this role would be self-produced events, interim event coordination, and the Washington State Garlic Fest, while strengthening customer service, continuity, and internal operational capacity.

This is not a request for expansion beyond demonstrated need. It is a request to stabilize operations that are currently functioning at maximum capacity.

Operational Background

The Fair Office currently operates with three full-time and one part-time casual office staff member. These positions collectively manage:

- The annual Southwest Washington Fair
- The Washington State Garlic Fest
- Spring & Fall Garage Sales
- Interim event rentals
- RV storage
- Contracts, payments, insurance compliance
- Customer service
- Sponsorship support
- Tourism coordination
- Marketing efforts
- Coordination with multiple County departments and external partners

While the Fair itself is seasonal, the fairgrounds operate year-round. The scope of responsibility has expanded, but staffing has not.

Over the past year, casual staffing support was utilized to assist specifically with event coordination and customer service functions. That support proved highly effective and clearly demonstrated that the current workload exceeds what can reasonably be sustained by three full-time employees.

The need is not temporary. It is structural.

Southwest Washington Fairgrounds
SouthwestWashingtonFairgrounds.org | 360-740-1495
1909 South Gold Street | Centralia, WA 98531



Position & Cost Summary

Classification: Grade 119 (Teamsters)

Recommended Option: 0.50 FTE

Total Annual Cost: \$51,334

Funding Strategy:

- Facilities Office Manager Allocation Adjustment
 - Reduce to 6% allocation → \$7,525.00
- Elimination of Select Budget Lines
 - Fair Small Attractive Assets → \$2,266.00
 - Interim Events Small Attractive Assets → \$1,648.00
- Total internal absorption 23% - \$11,439.00
- Additional General Fund need 78% - \$39,895.00

An alternative to the proposed funding strategy would be to absorb a larger portion of the staffing cost within the 1060 Fair budget. The only realistic area to draw from would be the Professional Services line item, which supports Fair entertainment. Reallocating funds from this category would directly reduce the entertainment offerings already planned. Given that our entertainment lineup is modest and carefully structured to fit within limited resources, further reductions would have a noticeable impact on the overall Fair experience.

Revenue Impact & Event Sustainability

In 2025:

- Spring & Fall Garage Sales generated \$24,010.53
- Washington State Garlic Fest generated:
 - \$15,293.98 in vendor rentals
 - \$6,618.46 in concession income
 - \$26,470.00 in admission revenue

Combined, these three self-produced events produced \$72,392.97 in direct revenue.

This total exceeds the annual cost of the proposed 0.5 FTE position.

Based on current vendor interest and admission trends, we are cautiously optimistic that 2026 may see additional growth. However, responsible budgeting does not rely on projected increases that have not yet been realized. Sustaining and building this revenue trend requires dedicated coordination capacity.

While other staff provide support roles, the focused oversight necessary to execute these events successfully has been made possible through the additional staffing capacity utilized this past year. Without continuation of that capacity, we will be required to reassess which events are operationally sustainable.



Realistically, without the 0.5 FTE, the Washington State Garlic Fest and the Fall Garage Sale would likely need to be cancelled in order to maintain service levels for the annual Fair and core fairgrounds operations.

This would reduce revenue, reduce community engagement, and narrow programming — but would be the responsible decision given staffing constraints.

Budget Reality & Operational Tradeoffs

The majority of the Fair Office budget is not discretionary. A significant portion is allocated toward:

- County overhead
- Staffing costs
- Required operational expenses

If the remaining balance of approximately \$14,228 were required to be absorbed fully within the limited discretionary budget lines under my authority, the most immediate impact would be to Fair entertainment.

Entertainment funding is already modest. Further reductions would directly impact guest experience and diminish the Fair's public draw.

In short:

- If staffing is not supported, events must be reduced.
- If staffing costs must be absorbed internally, entertainment will be reduced.

Neither option strengthens the Fair or Fairgrounds long term.

Summary & Clear Options

This proposal presents two clear paths:

Option A — Approve the 0.5 FTE with above addressed allocation

- Maintain Garlic Fest and Garage Sales
- Preserve revenue exceeding position cost
- Protect Fair entertainment funding
- Stabilize year-round operations
- Reduce single points of failure

Option B — Do Not Approve the 0.5 FTE

- Cancel Garlic Fest and future Garage Sales
- Reduce community engagement opportunities
- Reduce revenue streams
- Preserve core Fair operations only

The request is not about growth for growth's sake. It is about maintaining responsible operations in alignment with demonstrated workload and revenue generation.

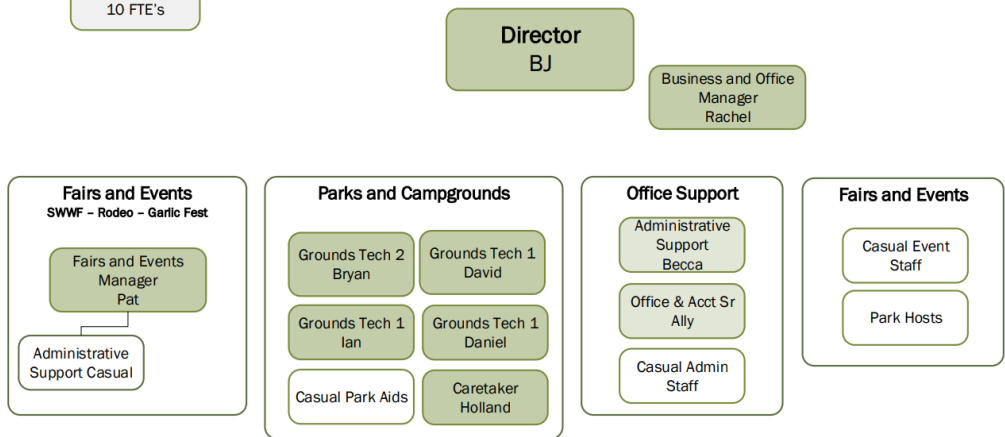
Approval of the 0.5 FTE position provides operational stability, protects revenue-generating programming, and positions the Fairgrounds for sustainable, measured growth

Organizational chart Prior to the 2025 Reorganization



10 FTE's

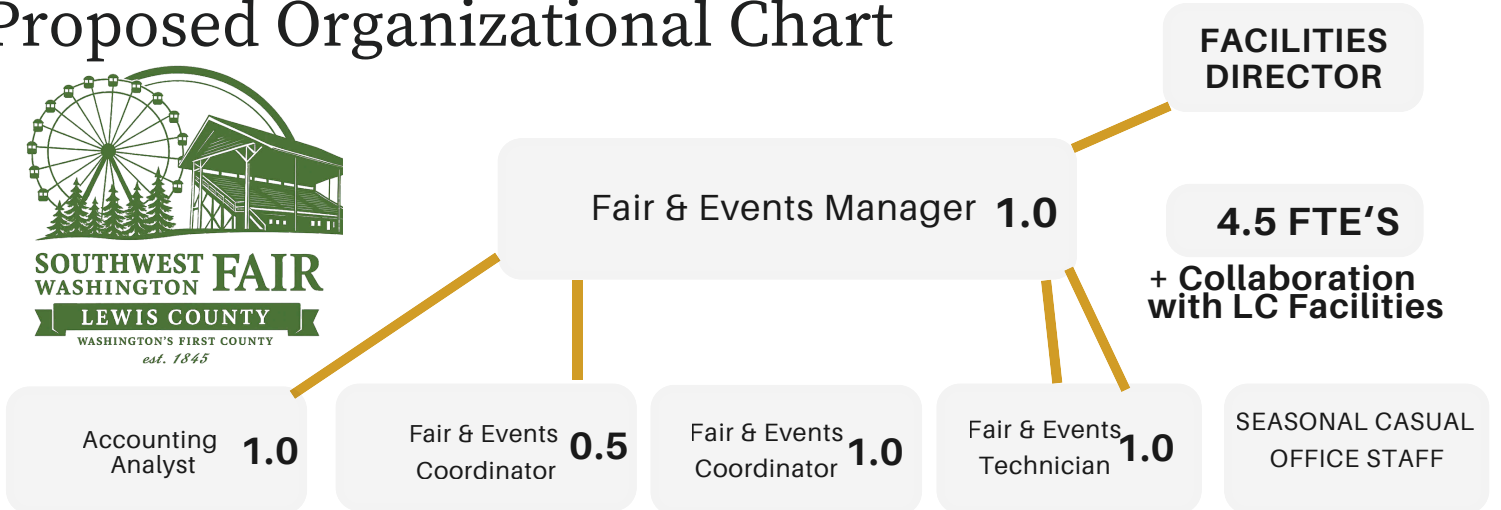
Parks – Recreation – Events - Campgrounds



Current Office Organizational Chart



Proposed Organizational Chart





FAIRS & EVENTS COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Fairs & Events Coordinator

Job Class: TBD

Pay Grade: 119

Effective Date: April 2021

FLSA: Non-Exempt

Revision Date: December 2024

NATURE OF WORK

Under limited supervision, assists the Manager in planning and coordinating the operations and activities of the Southwest Washington Fair; assists the Manager in overseeing event activities, rentals, tourism, and community functions; promotes community interest in the Parks, Fair, and the County's Fairground facilities; and assists the manager in supervising assigned personnel. Work hours will vary, depending on the Parks, Fair, and Fair Grounds scheduled events, festivals, activities and so on.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

*The following duties **ARE NOT** intended to serve as a comprehensive list of all duties performed by all employees in this classification, only a representative summary of the primary duties and responsibilities. Incumbent(s) may not be required to perform all duties listed and may be required to perform additional, position-specific duties.*

- Assists the Fair Manager in coordinating the day-to-day operations of the fair and interim events including administration, marketing, public relations, events management, contract administration, tourism efforts, and customer service.
- Assists the Manager in directing, supervising, and participating in the development, implementation, and administration of the SWWF's marketing, yearly event, interim events, and new event plans.
- Assists the Manager in supervising and evaluating the performance of assigned personnel; supervises and coordinates the work activities of county employees, vendors, and volunteers; coordinates and/or provides employee training, as assigned.
- Monitors assigned staff for compliance with departmental policies, procedures, and standards of service.
- Participates and facilitates with the Southwest Washington Fair Commission and Fair Association regarding Fair operations; prepares meeting agendas, reports, and presentations.
- Provides support and assistance with various projects conducted by the Commission and/or the Association including fundraisers, and other functions.
- Assists the Manager in conducting a variety of public relations functions; Assists the Manager in developing and maintaining partnerships with community organizations, clubs, and the media; delivers presentations and provides information regarding the SWWF, Parks, and other events.
- Assists the Manager in creating, setting up, and/or staffing display booths at various types of community events.
- Assists the Manager in preparing bids and coordinates bid processes; Assists the Manager in negotiating and administering contracts for a variety of event services and events including entertainment, sound, lighting, stages, tents, parking, and security. (See Fair/Events Manager Roles)
- Assists the Manager by providing event/activity needs for fairground events, activities, and interim event rentals. Participates in a variety of staff, community, and Fair industry meetings, conferences, and seminars.
- Provides 24/7 on-call service in relation to Parks, Fairgrounds and/or interim events issues.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT / PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Work is performed in a standard office environment and in and around fairground facilities; subject to sitting, standing, walking, bending, reaching, and lifting of objects up to 75 pounds.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS:

Associate's Degree in Fair Management, Marketing, or a closely related field; AND two (2) years of experience managing operations, marketing, and events.

A valid Driver's License is required; other certifications may be required.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Knowledge of:

- County policies and procedures.
- Fairground operations, policies, and procedures.
- Regulations and standards governing fair operations.
- Principles of marketing and public relations.
- Events management and contract administration principles.
- Supervisory and leadership principles, practices, and methods.
- Marketing and Promotion Experience.

Skills in:

- Managing and coordinating the operations and activities of events.
- Facilitating the delivery of high-quality event services to the community.
- Coordinating bid processes and negotiating/administering service contracts.
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with staff, volunteers, industry professionals, community organizations, outside agencies, vendors, contractors, and the general public.
- Communicating effectively verbally and in writing.
- Supervising, leading, and delegating tasks and authority.