



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0316, **Version:** 1

Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) recommending the Board:

- 1) Make findings in accordance with El Dorado County Ordinance section 3.13.030, D., that the provision of services provided by Catalyst Family, Inc. under Agreement 8494 are in the public's best interest and by legislative authority, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section (WIC) 11461.6 and Senate Bill 89, which mandates that Emergency Childcare Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) services be performed by independent contractors;
- 2) Make findings in accordance with Procurement Policy C-17 Section 3.4(2g) exempting the competitive bidding process, with Purchasing Agent concurrence, because "when so directed by the Court, the funding source, as mandated by the state, or other relevant authority";
- 3) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign Agreement 8494 with Catalyst Family, Inc., doing business as Catalyst Community, for the provision of Bridge Program services, for the term of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027, with a maximum first fiscal year obligation of \$200,697, with each successive year's maximum to be determined based upon the allocations received from the California Department of Social Services, for an estimated maximum obligation of \$780,000;
- 4) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute amendments relating to Agreement 8494, contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management, which do not extend the term of the Agreement or increase compensation above State and Federal funding allocated to the Bridge Program; and
- 5) Authorize the HHS Director, or the Chief Assistant Director, to execute programmatic, administrative, and fiscal documents relating to Agreement 8494.

FUNDING: State General Fund, leveraged on an annually adjusted basis by Federal funds at the percentage established based on prior fiscal year caseload.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

Within HHS Child Welfare Services (CWS), families and individuals who agree to take foster children act as a child's Resource Family (RF) and frequently must wait an undetermined period of time for the completion of the approval process before becoming eligible for a childcare subsidy. Consequently, there is a limited period when a RF must pay for foster childcare when/if it is needed. The lack of access to childcare for potential foster families seeking to take in a foster child is one of the top barriers to placing young foster children with families.

On January 1, 2018, pursuant to Senate Bill 89, the CDSS began offering the Bridge Program. The Bridge Program consist of three components: (1) Provision of childcare payments, in which county Child Welfare Departments (CWD) can provide time-limited vouchers to RFs for childcare; (2) Provision of childcare navigator services for families to assist with accessing childcare; and (3) Provision of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) training and coaching component for childcare providers to enhance their ability to provide nurturing and safe environments for children.

The Bridge Program aims to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in home-based family care settings, increase capacity of childcare programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the childcare needs of eligible families by

leveraging State General Fund with federal funds based on the percentage of annual child welfare caseloads.

Families meeting the eligibility requirements set forth under the Bridge Program may receive payments for childcare that are commensurate with the regional market rates for up to 12 months, as described in Section 8357 of the Education Code. Each child receiving a monthly childcare payment or voucher shall be provided with a childcare navigator, pursuant to paragraph (5), Subdivision (a), of Section 8212 of the Education Code, who shall work directly with the child's family, social worker, and the child and family team to assist in accessing childcare at the time of placement as well as long-term, subsidized childcare for the child, as necessary. The Bridge Program is not intended to create an entitlement but rather is a voluntary program requiring counties to opt-in for participation.

Pursuant to Welfare Institutions Code (WIC) 11461.6, the Bridge Program shall be administered by CWDs and the CDSS shall provide annual Bridge Program funding to those county CWDs that choose to participate in the program. On October 24, 2017, HHSa received approval from the Board to submit a plan to CDSS to participate in the Bridge Program and opt-in to receive annual program funding (Legistar item 17-1181). Following Board approval, HHSa submitted the opt-in Bridge Program application to the CDSS in November 2017.

The Bridge Program requires counties to enter into an agreement with their local Resource and Referral (R&R) agency to administer childcare navigation and TIC training and coaching services. Catalyst Community is the organization designated by CDSS to serve as the R&R for El Dorado County. Contracting with this vendor for Bridge Program services ensures HHSa is following these requirements.

On October 9, 2018, the Board approved and executed the first Agreement 2518 with Catalyst Community (then operating under the name of Choices for Children) for the provision of Bridge Program services, for the term of October 9, 2018, through June 30, 2021 (Legistar item 18-1176). Thereafter, the renewal Agreement 5344 was approved and executed by the Board on June 8, 2021, for the term of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024, to ensure continuity of the services (Legistar item 20-1645). This new Agreement 8494 with Catalyst Community, being presented in this agenda item, is a renewal agreement to ensure continued Bridge Program services for the next three years.

Funding allocation amounts for Fiscal Years (FY) 2025-26 and 2026-27 for the Bridge Program won't be published by the CDSS in future All County Letters (ACL) until those allocations have been approved by the State. Upon release of the ACLs by the CDSS with those specified allocation amounts for those FYs, the CDSS notification shall be provided to Catalyst Community via a Notice to Party Letter by the County Contract Administrator or designee, with FY budget allocation revisions made to Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 in Agreement 8494; with the maximum obligation adjusted to match the allocation, without the need for an amendment.

In adherence with Procurement Policy C-17 Section 3.4(2g) exemption from competitive bidding, HHSa recommends, with Purchasing Agent concurrence, that the Board waive competitive bidding requirements as "when so directed by the Court, the funding source, as mandated by the state, or other relevant authority." Catalyst Family, Inc. is the provider designated by the CDSS for Bridge Program services, therefore, it is not possible to obtain competitive bids.

ALTERNATIVES: The Board could decline to approve the recommended Agreement 8494,

whereupon the County allocated Bridge Program funding would go unspent, and the County's responsibilities for opting into the CDSS' Bridge Program would be out of compliance.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

- 1) 10/24/2017, 17-1181, HHSA ER Child Care Bridge Funding
- 2) 10/09/2018, 18-1176, HHSA Choices for Children Agreement 2518
- 3) 06/08/2021, 20-1645, HHSA - Agreement 5344 Catalyst Fam. Inc.
- 4) 04/05/2022, 22-0081, HHSA Catalyst Fam. 5344 A1

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Approved by County Counsel, Human Resources, Risk Management, and Procurement and Contracts Division. The Auditor-Controller has been notified in accordance with Policy B-12.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with this agenda item. Sufficient appropriations were included in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Budget and will be included in future budgets for the term of the Agreement assuming funds are appropriated in the State budget. HHSA can start spending the Bridge Program funding prior to the receipt of the CDSS allocation letters with each FY's 1st quarter claim, as CDSS loads an estimated allocation into the claiming system to enable HHSA to start drawing down funds. HHSA expects to receive all CDSS allocation letters before each FY's 2nd quarter claim is due, to enable HHSA to claim expenditures.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS:

Clerk of the Board to obtain signature of Chair on one original Agreement for Services #8494

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

N/A

CONTACT:

Olivia Byron-Cooper, MPH, Director, Health and Human Services Agency