



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0232, **Version:** 1

Health and Human Services Agency recommending the Board:

- 1) Accept one-time funding (FENIX 6328) from the California Department of Social Services for an estimated amount of \$226,606 to enhance Child Welfare Services' Emergency Response services, for a term to begin upon execution through June 30, 2025;
- 2) Delegate authority to the Health and Human Services Agency Director, or designee, to sign the County Notice Letter to secure the funding; and
- 3) Authorize the Health and Human Services Agency Director, or designee, to execute and administer any subsequent administrative documents relating to said award, including any extension(s) or amendment(s), which do not increase net county cost, and required fiscal and programmatic reports.

FUNDING: State General Funds.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) issued All County Letter 22-02 (ACL 22-02) on December 30, 2021 notifying counties that \$50 million of state general funds were appropriated in the State Budget Act of 2021 to enhance Child Welfare Emergency Response (ER) services.

Emergency response services, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16501(f), consist of the response system providing in-person response, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to reports of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, for the purpose of investigation and to determine the necessity for providing initial intake services and crisis intervention to maintain the child safely in their own home or to protect the safety of the child.

ACL 22-02 describes the allowable uses of the funding, which include, but are not limited to:

Workforce Strategies:

- Hiring additional ER social workers to complete hotline and/or investigation activities;
- Hiring additional ER supervisors or other ER support staff;
- Fund staffing and supportive services to conduct prevention Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings during an ER investigation;
- Offering a pay differential for ER staff or those staff with higher education and/or experience;
- Additional support staff to divert administrative activities away from ER program staff in order to focus on core ER activities;
- Increase pay for ER staff;
- Implement pay or other incentives to promote retention of current ER staff;
- Hire/retain subject matter expertise within the ER program to support ER work;
- Fund OT costs to support additional work to improve the quality of ER functions and to provide appropriate support to families.

Best Practice Strategies:

- Increase time allowed for core activities such as screening calls, completing assessment, making home visits, safety planning, following up on referrals, etc;

- Increased utilization of CFT with focus on prevention;
- Structured Decision Making (SDM®) case reading to ensure fidelity to assessments and review referral dispositions;
- Increase time ER staff spend reviewing and training with supervisors.

Technology Strategies:

- Implement a call center for hotline calls to be answered and assessed more efficiently;
- Purchase iPads or other devices with access to tools (Safe Measures, SDM, CWS/CMS) to help social workers use them more efficiently and consistently in the field.

CDSS has allocated approximately \$266,606 to the County of El Dorado's Child Welfare Services Division, and the funds must be expended by June 30, 2025. Counties who choose to receive funds are required to submit a summary of activities to CDSS by March 4, 2022. The summary must focus on increasing ER staff or ER services quality. Though it would be ideal to hire additional staffing in Child Welfare for these purposes, this is only one-time funding, at this point. As such, HHSA management is developing strategies to identify the most prudent use of funds that would meet the States approval while, first and foremost, improving services quality for residents in El Dorado County. It is anticipated that a portion of these funds would be used to cover overtime costs of current staff that are completing ER hotline or investigation activities. Additionally, technology needs are being examined, and it is anticipated that a portion of the funds would be used to expand mobile technology for staff, as well as to improve the Child Welfare hotline phone system. These described actions would increase efficiency in staff time, allowing Child Welfare to more quickly process intakes and perform investigative activities, which would improve services quality.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board could choose to not accept the additional funding. In this scenario, CDSS will redistribute El Dorado's planning allocation amount to the remaining participating counties. This would limit the capacity for Child Welfare to respond with Emergency Response services.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION:

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel and Risk Management

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with this agenda item. Sufficient appropriations are included in the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:

County Strategic Goal: "Healthy Communities, Improved Health, Well-being, and Self-sufficiency of El

Dorado County communities, residents, and visitors.”

CONTACT

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