



## Legislation Text

File #: 22-0988, Version: 1

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

- 1) Award Request for Proposal 22-918-049 to the proposal identified as appropriate by the evaluation panel, Sierra Child and Family Services (SCFS), Inc., for the provision of Family Urgent Response System and Mobile Response System and Stabilization Team services, mandated by the California Department of Social Services for child welfare jurisdictions, to include the operation of a 24/7 telephone answering system and deployment of a trauma-informed in-person stabilization service team to foster youth and their caregivers in need; and
- 2) Authorize HHS to negotiate a 3-year Agreement for Services with SCFS for an estimated budget not to exceed \$2,669,976 for the term of the Agreement, for Fiscal Years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25, and return to the Board for approval of the Agreement upon completion of negotiations.

**FUNDING:** 100% State funding allocated to the California Department of Social Services appropriated for the Family Urgent Response Services and Mobile Response Stabilization Systems.

**DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND:**

The State of California (State) established the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) program in 2019 through the enactment of Senate Bill 80 as amended by Assembly Bill 79 (Statutes of 2020). The Budget Act of 2020 enacted by Governor Newsom allocated the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) \$26.1 million in State General Funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 for the FURS program to be enacted, with continued allocations planned for future fiscal years. The CDSS, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association, allocated funding directly to all California county child welfare jurisdictions for the implementation of a countywide established Mobile Response System and Stabilization Team (MRSST).

The FURS program builds upon the Continuum of Care Reform (Statutes of 2015), which reformed child welfare services for foster youth by reducing the use of group homes and increasing the use of home-based caregiver placements. The FURS is a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system designed to provide collaborative and immediate phone-based response through a CDSS-operated hotline, coupled with county-level telephone response and in-person mobile response stabilization services, during situations of instability for purposes of preserving the relationship of the caregiver and the foster child or youth.

As mandated under the FURS program pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16526 through 16530, the CDSS in conjunction with California county child welfare jurisdictions must provide immediate trauma-informed support on a twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week basis, to include providing urgent telephone response and in-person response and stabilization services to foster youth and/or caregivers, to assist them with trauma-informed supports intended to have multiple effects, including:

- Preventing placement disruptions and preserving the relationship between the child or youth and their caregiver;
- Preventing the need for a 911 call or law enforcement involvement and avoiding the criminalization of traumatized youth;

- Preventing psychiatric hospitalization and placement into congregate care; and
- Promoting healing as a family.

CDSS required the FURS statewide toll-free hotline and county telephone response answering and in-person stabilization services to begin operation on March 1, 2021. The County of El Dorado (County) and County of Alpine Child Welfare programs each received an initial FURS allocation of \$443,508 in FY 2020-21 to implement the FURS mandate. The County of Alpine requested that the County of El Dorado's Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Child Welfare Services (CWS) provide the state-mandated FURS and MRSST services for Alpine County foster youth/caregivers, and as a result, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (#6300) with the County specifying that El Dorado County would provide these services for both Counties. In this MOU, El Dorado County agreed to initiate a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain a single contractor to provide the mandated FURS and MRSST services to both Alpine and El Dorado Counties if needed. Furthermore, Alpine County requested that their FURS allocation be reallocated to the County of El Dorado by the CDSS, thereby, increasing the County's allocation to \$887,016 for FY 2020-21. Future annual FURS allocations are expected to continue for the ongoing operation of the County operated MRSST.

Although county child welfare jurisdictions are the direct recipients of the FURS state allocation, legislation requires that child welfare, probation and behavioral health jurisdictions work together to establish a joint county-based mobile response system, including a stabilization team to provide in-person support as needed. In a joint effort to implement the County-level FURS mobile response system, County CWS, Probation and the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) have been working together to support the foster youth and their caregivers in El Dorado and Alpine Counties since the FURS required implementation in March 1, 2021. While they have been supporting this mandate, each of these programs have determined that they lack adequate staff to fully implement the FURS MRSST using County personnel and it was determined that a solicitation was needed to procure a subcontractor to provide these mandated services. Accordingly, on March 31, 2022, the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) Procurement and Contracts Division, released RFP 22-918-049, to solicit providers to operate the HHSA FURS phone system and MRSST in both El Dorado and Alpine Counties.

A single proposal was received by Sierra Child and Family Services (SCFS), Inc., which met the requirements of the RFP. This proposal was evaluated by a panel of three (3) raters, including members from the HHSA CWS, BHD and Alpine County, who are knowledgeable of the FURS program and system response needs. As a result of the RFP evaluative process, HHSA recommends entering into an Agreement for Services for a 3-year term, and is requesting the Board approve the award of this RFP to the qualified proposer, SCFS, to provide the FURS and MRSST services in the County. SCFS has been contracting with HHSA for various child and family services since 2006.

HHSA will return to the Board with the final Agreement for Services for approval.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

Should the Board decline to award RFP 22-918-049, HHSA will be unable to meet mandated FURS and MRSST service requirements, and while the County will continue to provide services through its existing staff, this will result in the use of overtime hours. This may cause gaps in the service requirements.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION:**

N/A

**OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

County of El Dorado (County), Chief Administrative Office Procurement and Contracts Division.  
County Probation, HHSA Behavioral Health Division, and County of Alpine.

**CAO RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve as recommended.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact related to the award of the RFP, as the Agreement to be negotiated will be brought to the Board for approval once finalized. Services provided will be funded by the CDSS appropriated funds allocated to the HHSA Child Welfare Services for the Family Urgent Response Services and Mobile Response Systems and Stabilization Teams. This funding is included in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Recommended Budget and will be included in subsequent fiscal year budget requests, upon approval of the final Agreement.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS:**

No action required.

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT:**

Healthy Communities, Improved Health, Well-being, and Self-sufficiency of El Dorado County communities, residents, and visitors.

**CONTACT**

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