



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 8/25/2026

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Child Support Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Gigi Mertle (707) 565-4140

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution Proclaiming August 2026 Child Support Awareness Month

Executive Summary:

Child Support Awareness Month has been observed annually in August since 1983, when Congress officially designated National Child Support Awareness Month. Over the years, the State of California and Governor Newsom have consistently recognized the vital role of child support and commended the dedicated work of local child support agencies across the state.

California remains committed to promoting equity within the child support system by supporting co-parenting and empowering both parents to fulfill their financial and caregiving responsibilities. By giving children the resources they need to thrive, local child support services help families successfully navigate these processes-avoiding the high costs and obstacles often associated with private companies or litigation.

Discussion:

Since 1995, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, in partnership with the Department of Child Support Services, has designated August as Child Support Awareness Month. This month-long observance recognizes parents' commitment to supporting their children, promotes public awareness of the valuable resources available to families, and honors the vital role of the child support program employees.

Last year, California distributed \$2.5 billion in child support collections statewide. Locally, approximately \$31 million was distributed to families in Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Department of Child Support Services (Sonoma DCSS) manages approximately 9,000 cases, including over 5,300 cases with individuals currently or formerly receiving assistance from public programs, such as CalWORKs and Medi-Cal. In 2025, Sonoma DCSS was recognized by the State of California Department of Child Support Services for achieving the highest rate in Support Order Establishment among medium-sized agencies, ranking #1 statewide for the highest rate of stipulated orders and #4 for overall performance.

Child Support Awareness Month is a time to recognize the vital role DCSS plays strengthening families and communities. Today, the child support program extends far beyond its traditional responsibilities of locating parents and establishing paternity, medical support, and financial obligations. It now embraces innovative, family-centered approaches that promote better outcomes for children through meaningful parental

engagement, thoughtful legislative efforts, and services designed to advance equity and inclusion across all populations. The child support program is a critical public program that represents an important source of income helping lift families out of poverty and ensuring children are supported and thrive.

Throughout the month of August, Sonoma DCSS will bring awareness to the importance of Child Support through inclusive outreach efforts coordinated with local partners and Community Based Organizations. To promote equitable access to services, the Department will also be launching its Mobile Outreach Van to meet community members where they are, ensuring families in underserved areas can easily receive information and support. Sonoma DCSS will engage with a wide range of community organizations, local employers, private attorneys, and local Sonoma County Superior Court to strengthen relationships and expand awareness of available resources.

Sonoma DCSS staff consistently provides exceptional customer service, strengthening financial stability for families and fostering healthier environments for children in our community. Their ongoing commitment creates meaningful, lasting benefits for the families we serve.

To honor this important work, the Department of Child Support Services respectfully requests that the Board of Supervisors adopt a Gold Resolution declaring August as Child Support Awareness Month.

Prior Board Actions:

The Board has proclaimed August as Child Support Awareness Month annually since 1995.

FISCAL SUMMARY**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A