

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 2025 Child Support Awareness Month

Executive Summary:

Child Support Awareness Month has been observed annually since 1983, when Congress officially designated August as National Child Support Awareness Month. The State of California has embraced this national recognition as well. Governor Gavin Newsom highlights the importance of child support and commends the dedicated efforts of local child support services offices throughout the state.

The proclamation also emphasizes California's ongoing commitment to promoting equity within the child support system, with a focus on supporting both parents in co-parenting arrangements, providing children with the resources they need to thrive while empowering parents to fulfill their financial and caregiving responsibilities. The program also helps families avoid the expense and hassles that come with attorneys and private companies.

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, over \$30 million was distributed to families in Sonoma County. The Sonoma County Department of Child Support Services (Sonoma DCSS) manages over 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 2024, Sonoma DCSS was recognized by the state of California Department of Child Support Services for achieving the second-highest rate in Support Order Establishment and the highest rate of Stipulated Orders among local child support agencies throughout the state.

August is dedicated to recognizing the importance of child support services. The child support program focus has expanded beyond the core functions of locating parents, establishing and enforcing of paternity, medical and support obligations to providing innovative approaches that support successful outcomes for children through parental engagement, legislative initiatives, and targeted equity and inclusion services.

Parents plays a crucial role in supporting children and lifting families out of poverty. Consistent child support payments help families meet essential needs like food and housing, resulting in improved financial stability and child well-being.

Throughout the month, Sonoma DCSS will bring awareness to the importance of Child Support through outreach efforts coordinated with local partners, including advertisements in local magazines, newsletter, social media, and podcasts. The department will collaborate with Bay Area counties to deliver an employer workshop designed to help employers navigate the requirements and processes of the child support program. Sonoma DCSS will also honor the dedication of parents and caregivers to the well-being of children and families by distributing personalized thank-you cards in recognition of their meaningful contributions to the child support program.

Sonoma DCSS employees are dedicated to delivering excellent customer service, resulting in a positive impact on the lives of children and families within our community. Their unwavering dedication not only promotes financial stability, but also contributes to healthier family dynamics and improved outcomes for children.

In recognition of these ongoing efforts, the Department of Child Support Services respectfully requests that the Board of Supervisors adopt a Gold Resolution proclaiming 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