



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/14/2021

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County
Department or Agency Name(s): County Counsel
Staff Name and Phone Number: Robert Pittman, (707) 565-2421
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Amendment to Legal Services Agreement with Gordon-Creed, Kelly, Holl & Sugerman, LLP

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Sonoma County Counsel to execute an amendment to the legal services agreement with the law firm of Gordon-Creed, Kelley, Holl & Sugerman, LLP to increase the contract maximum by \$100,000, for a total not to exceed amount of \$200,000 through June 30, 2022.

Executive Summary:

The Office of the County Counsel advises and represents the Family, Youth and Children's Division of the Human Services Department in child abuse and neglect cases filed in the juvenile court under Welfare and Institutions Code sections 300 et seq. Since November 2020, due to County Counsel capacity limits, some of the appeals in these child welfare cases have been handled by the law firm of Gordon-Creed, Kelley, Holl & Sugerman, LLP, pursuant to a Legal Services Agreement authorized by your Board on January 5, 2021. In order to continue that representation and meet the demand caused by the increase in appeals, the County Counsel seeks a \$100,000 increase to the not to exceed amount.

Discussion:

The Office of the County Counsel advises and represents the Family, Youth and Children's Division of the Human Services Department (the "Department") in child abuse and neglect cases filed in the juvenile court under Welfare and Institutions Code sections 300 et seq. The Department files an average of 450-500 cases each year. Due to the constitutional rights implicated in these cases, aggrieved parties, including many with court-appointed counsel, have numerous opportunities to appeal the juvenile court's ruling during the life of the case.

Across California, the number of appeals in juvenile dependency cases has risen in the last six to eight months. Some of the increase is attributed to new California Supreme Court precedent and some likely to the lifting of COVID restrictions that has enabled cases to move forward after delays caused by an inability to provide meaningful reunification services and visitation to parents. Gordon-Creed, Kelley, Holl & Sugerman LLP deliver top-quality work product at a reasonable rate (\$295 partner/\$280 associate), and the County Counsel's Office would like to continue its engagement with the firm for appellate services in juvenile cases. Funding for these legal services is included in the County Counsel and Human Services Department FY 21-22 budgets.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Prior Board Actions:

On January 5, 2021, the Board authorized the County Counsel to enter into a Legal Services Agreement with Gordon-Creed, Kelly, Holl & Sugerman LLP for a term of November 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022 with a not to exceed amount of \$100,000.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$200,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$200,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$200,000		
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$200,000		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Funding for legal services is included in the County Counsel and Human Services Department's FY 21-22 budgets.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Legal Services Agreement with Gordon-Creed, Kelley, Holl & Sugerman, LLP

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

Agenda Date: 12/14/2021

N/A