



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/14/2020

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Nick Honey, 707-565-4343; Briana Downey, 707-565-4348

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Valley of the Moon Children's Center Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program Consulting Services Contract

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Human Services Department Director to execute a contract with The Indigo Project for \$298,800 to develop a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program at Valley of the Moon Children's Center. (Majority Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

The Indigo Project will provide consultancy to the Human Services Department, Family, Youth & Children's Services Division to develop a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) at Valley of the Moon Children's Center for foster youth who need intensive therapeutic treatment. The program will provide time-limited, high-quality intervention services and supports that are tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual children. The ultimate goal is to transition children to permanent families and/or prepare them for a successful transition into adulthood. Creation of an STRTP will meet upcoming federal guidelines slated to come into effect in late 2021 for Qualified Residential Treatment programs.

Discussion:

The Human Services Department (HSD) has been implementing changes in service delivery based on California Assembly Bill 403 that put Continuum of Care Reform into law on January 1, 2016. Continuum of Care Reform has involved a restructuring of California's foster care system to increase the accessibility of family homes for youth while they are in the foster care system. The law envisions that all children will live with committed, permanent, nurturing families as opposed to living in institutional settings. It ensures that congregate care is a short-term, high-quality intervention that is part of a continuum of care for youth, with services and supports tailored to meet the individual needs of the children and families being served.

In order to realize the goals of Continuum of Care Reform, Valley of the Moon Children's Center (VMCC) engaged in an extensive literature review and initiated a robust stakeholder feedback process in 2016-2017. The process was undertaken to ascertain how VMCC could meet the vision for improved congregate care within the existing Emergency Shelter, and how to best meet the evolving needs of Sonoma County foster youth. A comprehensive plan emerged to:

- a) Reduce the length of stay in the Emergency Shelter to 10 days by transforming it into a Temporary Shelter Care Facility.

- b) Develop coordinated transitions from the shelter with services and supports attached to ensure stabilization of youth in new homes.
- c) Build a resource hub for caregivers to develop networks, find mentorship, and access resources and support.
- d) Design an STRTP to supplement the existing local options for intensive therapeutic services, so that Sonoma County youth can be served within their own community.

To date, the first three pieces of this plan have been accomplished: - VMCC has already transitioned to a Temporary Shelter Care Facility, created a Transition Support Team, and grown the Caregiver Resource Unit. The focus is now on designing and implementing an STRTP to provide much needed local therapeutic services for Sonoma County foster youth.

Sonoma County serves approximately 450 foster youth each year. On average, ten percent of those youth need intensive treatment services to address past and/or current trauma, mental health needs, or substance use issues. The STRTP will provide a coordinated trauma-informed, individualized, strengths-based treatment approach with highly trained staff to address the immediate and underlying needs of each youth. The proposed STRTP will be co-located with the existing Emergency Shelter program and will provide 3-12 months of intensive treatment services to foster youth.

Of the Sonoma County youth receiving intensive treatment at an STRTP, only one quarter are being served within Sonoma County, while the rest are receiving services in other areas of California or in other states. Out-of-County and Out-of-State placements can delay progress towards strengthening family connections with a youth as travel and schedules must be arranged for visits. Additionally, social workers must travel monthly to visit youth out of the County leading to a strain on their work time as well as the Department incurring travel costs that would otherwise be unnecessary. STRTPs must go through a robust authorization process including an application to the California Department of Social Services, approval from the Department of Health Care Services to deliver mental health services, as well as receiving accreditation from a nationally accredited program. As a result of these changes, the capacity of STRTPs statewide has been significantly reduced which is similarly reflected in Sonoma County; with one fully-licensed STRTP, one provisionally-licensed STRTP, and one group home that is planning on transitioning to a STRTP. All three have limited capacity and serve youth from across the entire state. The intention of the VMCC STRTP is to add capacity within the community and serve local youth, so that youth can remain in their community and stay connected to their family and support networks.

The contract is inclusive of a multi-phase project design and implementation plan:

- Phase 1 (2-3 months): Research and Program Design: to build on the research that the Family Youth & Children's Division has already begun toward developing an STRTP program, including developing a staffing model, an operating budget, and a trauma responsive program design.
- Phase 2 (2-3 months): Application and Plan of Operation: to complete the California Department of Social Services STRTP application and Plan of Operation.
- Phase 3 (9-12 months): Implementation: to develop position descriptions, policies & procedures, and a staffing model.
- Phase 4 (9-12 months): Accreditation and Certification: to coordinate the national accreditation process for the STRTP through the Council on Accreditation, as well as the Mental Health Plan Certification with County Behavioral Health services.

A Request for Proposals was originally released on July 22, 2019; a review committee convened on September 13, 2019 and selected a consultant group. The Board of Supervisors approved the contract on December 17, 2019. Subsequent to that approval, the selected consultant was not able to fulfill the contract. The Request for Proposals was released again on February 26, 2020, to find an individual or agency with expertise in designing and implementing youth residential programs with knowledge of Child Welfare and Continuum of Care Reform. Two submissions were received. A review committee was convened on May 5, 2020, consisting of 3 members and 1 facilitator. The review committee selected the Indigo Project as the most qualified. The Indigo Project has extensive experience with program management of residential facilities, and designing and implementing clinical programs, as well as applying evidence-based programming and innovative practices into new program design. Human Services will come back to the Board in early 2021 with an update on the development of this STRTP program.

Prior Board Actions:

3/10/20: Approved the Human Services Department's System Improvement Plan, which included goals in the area of developing a full continuum of placement options.

12/17/19: Approved the Human Services Department's contract for consulting services to develop a Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program Valley of the Moon Children's Center.

9/20/16: Approved the Human Services Department's Continuum of Care Reform initiatives.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$124,500	\$149,400	\$24,900
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$124,500	\$149,400	\$24,900
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$124,500	\$149,400	\$24,900
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$124,500	\$149,400	\$24,900

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The funding source of the \$298,800 is the Child Welfare account (11515) fund balance--a separate account from the department's primary 11505. The fund balance in 11515 has been built up over the years specifically to implement Continuum of Care Reform for the Valley of the Moon Children's Center. The current balance on account 11515 is about \$3.8 million, which is more than sufficient to fund the proposed STRTP project over three years.

Staffing Impacts:

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Contract

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

None