



SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 2/9/2021

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Katie Greaves 565-8501, Shaydra Ennis 565-8086

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

SonomaWORKS Housing Support Program and Welfare-to-Work Program Positions

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a position resolution approving the addition of 2.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employment & Training Specialists and 2.0 FTE Human Services Aide positions for the Welfare to Work Program; addition of 1.0 FTE Social Service Supervisor I position and 2.0 FTE Social Service Worker III positions for the SonomaWORKS Housing Support Program; and extending the end dates of 2.0 time-limited Social Worker III positions dedicated to the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program to June 30, 2023. (Majority Vote)
- B) Adopt a budget resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments to the Human Services Department (HSD) FY 2020-2021 budget in the amount of \$423,600 to reflect increased appropriation for housing and homeless programs in the Employment & Training Division effective 02/09/2021. (4/5th Vote)

Executive Summary:

COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on the economy, including high unemployment and the looming threat of increased homelessness when the rent moratorium expires. Employment and job training, and counseling and social work services are critical for job seeking individuals who are struggling to find work and housing in the current economic market. The Human Services Department (HSD) is requesting authority to add and extend the following Employment & Training Division (E&T) positions:

- Add 1.0 FTE Social Service Supervisor I position for the Housing Assistance Response Team (HART) which will provide the necessary guidance and support to enable the team to best serve the homeless community.
- Add 2.0 FTE Social Service Worker III (SWIII) positions within the SonomaWORKS Housing Support Program (HSP), part of the HART. These positions will provide outreach, case management, placement in transitional and permanent housing, coordination with the homeless system of care, and other wrap-around safety-net services to families experiencing homelessness.
- Add 2.5 FTE Employment & Training Specialists responsible for determining the initial and ongoing eligibility of families receiving SonomaWORKS Welfare to Work, Family Stabilization services, and the Housing Support Program to assist clients in identifying and mitigating personal challenges, barriers to employment, and unstable employment histories to reach self-sufficiency. 1.0 FTE will require bilingual skills.
- Add 2.0 FTE Human Services Aide positions to provide support to five Employment and Training intake

and continuing units who conduct eligibility determinations. These positions provide cash assistance and supportive services to clients and serve as a liaison between E&T staff and disadvantaged individuals and groups in the community targeted for outreach through schools and neighborhoods. Both FTE will require bilingual skills.

- Extend 2.0 time-limited Social Worker III positions, currently approved through June 30, 2021, to be extended through June 30, 2023 to provide social work services for the Housing and Disability Advocacy Program. These positions provide outreach, case management, placement in transitional and permanent housing, and linkages to other vital services for individuals applying for Supplemental Security Income.

E&T staff in SonomaWORKS, Housing Support Program, Housing Disability and Advocacy Program and in Job Link coordinate and collaborate with existing homeless systems of care. E&T social work staff are active and regular participants in the ACCESS Sonoma Interdepartmental Multidisciplinary Team through which they coordinate care for homeless residents of encampments. E&T contracts with and funds the Community Development Commission to provide housing navigation and location services for the Housing Support Program and staff of both agencies engage in case-level service coordination on behalf of shared clients. E&T contracts with and funds the Department of Health Services for Behavioral Health Care services for SonomaWORKS families facing crises including homelessness. E&T contracts with a number of community-based organizations that provide housing and ancillary services such as Interfaith Shelter Network, YWCA and Legal Aid.

Discussion:

In 2019, the Employment & Training Division provided cash assistance, employment services and housing services to nearly 4,000 individuals and families in Sonoma County. These services are provided through four main programs: SonomaWORKS, Job Link, the Housing Support Program (HSP) and CalFresh Employment & Training. SonomaWORKS currently has approximately 1,300 active cases, which includes approximately 3,000 individuals. There has been a 38% increase in SonomaWORKS Welfare to Work cases from 2019 to 2020. CalWORKs (the state name for the SonomaWORKS program) funding has increased in recent years due to the increased complexities in serving eligible families in a high cost of living area.

In order to be eligible for the program, families must live below the poverty line, and they are often on the brink of homelessness. CalWORKs has become a homeless prevention program with a focus on providing critical interventions through the use of supportive and vocational services to help lift families out of poverty. These interventions require an intensive and multifaceted approach in assessing the needs of CalWORKs families and arranging, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and advocating for multiple services to meet families' complex needs. CalWORKs Employment Services funding supports services to individuals in the CalWORKs Welfare to Work (WTW) Program based on the intensity of case management necessary to remove barriers to employment, and helps get people into stable housing and jobs that offer a career path and a living wage.

An increase in State CalWORKs funding from FY 2019-20 to FY 2020-21 includes funding for the continuing increase in caseload due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as enhanced funding to support more intensive services.

SonomaWORKS (federally known as the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program) provides cash aid

and services to eligible families that have children in the home. If a family has little or no cash and needs housing, food, utilities, clothing or medical care, they may be eligible to receive immediate short-term help. Families that apply and qualify for ongoing assistance receive money each month to help pay for housing, food and other necessary expenses. The increase in SonomaWORKS cases means E&T staff are having to do more eligibility determinations in order to establish and maintain families' access to benefits. Certifying a family's eligibility for benefits is critically important because it opens the door to the larger safety net of cash assistance, child care and myriad other wrap-around supportive services. The addition of 2.5 FTE Employment & Training Specialist positions is vital to ensure we are able to process applications for aid timely in order to prevent families from losing their housing and jobs.

The impact of COVID-19 on our community has outlined a great need for targeted outreach, specifically towards potentially vulnerable populations in specified geographic areas who may not have equal ability to access critical services that help address basic needs. The addition of the 2.0 FTE Human Services Aide positions is necessary to carry out service delivery and targeted outreach to schools and neighborhoods in underserved and Spanish-speaking communities, primarily in the Roseland neighborhood and in the northern, western and eastern parts of Sonoma County.

The SonomaWORKS Housing Support Program (HSP) is funded annually by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program. The SonomaWORKS HSP utilizes a Housing First model to address the immediate and long-term housing needs of SonomaWORKS clients. The SonomaWORKS HSP was implemented in 2014 and is entering its sixth year. Since inception, the program has permanently housed 337 SonomaWORKS families.

Adding 2.0 FTE Social Service Worker III positions to the HSP will increase the number of homeless individuals and families served. Extending the 2.0 FTE existing time-limited Social Service Worker III positions to June 30, 2023 will enable the department to continue to carry out services required for the State's Housing and Disability Advocacy Program (HDAP), for which the department receives dedicated funding from CDSS. The 1.0 FTE Social Service Supervisor I position will provide necessary guidance and support to the housing unit to enable them to best serve the homeless community. E&T housing program staff work in close coordination with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Interfaith Shelter Network, Department of Health Services, community advocacy programs and various housing providers. Multiple E&T staff are part of the ACCESS Sonoma team and actively participate in care coordination for the most vulnerable county residents.

All positions requested are supported with funding already budgeted in the approved FY 2020-2021 department budget.

Prior Board Actions:

April 23, 2020: Approval of two time-limited positions for the Housing Disability and Advocacy Program through June 30, 2021.

July 9, 2019: Approval of two new positions and contracts for the Housing Support Program in the amount of \$1,219,825.

January 8, 2019: Approval of additional appropriations in support of the Housing Support Program (HSP); a new Program Coordinator position in support of the HSP; and a contract amendment to increase funding for Catholic Charities to provide direct client housing assistance.

June 11, 2018: Funding approval for the HSP in the amount of \$969,471 and a contract with Catholic Charities to administer the SonomaWORKS HSP in the amount of \$385,603.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	423,600	1,346,050	1,386,432
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	423,600	1,346,050	1,386,432
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	423,600	1,346,050	1,386,432
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	423,600	1,346,050	1,386,432

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This incremental cost of \$423,600 (pro-rated for 5 months from February through June 2021) for the 7.5 positions will be posted to Subsection 24030130 (Employment & Training) and charged to General Ledger account code 50604 in this FY 2020-2021. Funding for the Social Service Supervisor I, Social Worker III, Employment & Training Specialist and Human Services Aide job classifications will be obtained from the unencumbered CalWORKs Single Allocation and Housing Support Program (HSP), both provided via allocation by the California Department of Social Services. These funds have been awarded (CFL 20/21-34) and are included in the FY 2020-21 HSD budget. No County General Fund monies will be used for these positions. FY 21-22 is the first year with full-year costs for the 7.5 FTEs. Payroll costs in subsequent fiscal years also assume a 3.0% COLA increase year-over-year. HSP and HDAP are permanent programs within the Employment & Training Division, and considering the ongoing need for housing assistance HSD does not anticipate any cuts to this funding in the foreseeable future. The Governor's FY 21-22 proposed budget (January 2021 version) earmarks \$25 million from state General Fund for HDAP, signaling the state's continuing commitment to this valuable program. Coupled with CDSS's allowance for unspent funds in the prior two budget cycles to roll-over into subsequent cycles, payroll for program staff will continue to be funded at the state level.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Social Service Supervisor I	\$6,207.44 - \$7,544.94	1.0	
Social Service Worker III	\$5,203.89 - \$6,325.71	2.0	

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Employment & Training Specialist	\$4,555.14 - \$5,537.83	2.5	
Human Services Aide	\$3,113.29 - \$3,786.38	2.0	

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The Employment and Training Division's Housing Assistance Response Team will be supervised by the Social Service Supervisor I, which includes an existing Employment & Training Coordinator, 6 Social Worker IIIs (4 existing), and 1 existing Human Services Aide. The 2.5 new Employment & Training Specialist positions and 2 Human Service Aide positions will be added to two existing eligibility units. With these new positions added, there will be one unit of 9 and one unit of 10 staff.

Attachments:

1. Position Resolution
2. Budget Resolution

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

N/A