



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-1125, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Nick Honey, 565-4343; Regina de Melo, 565-4346

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): All

Title:

Approval of Child Care Funding for Child Welfare Clients

Recommended Action:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the Director of the Human Services Department to:

- A) Execute an agreement with the California Department of Education for Human Services to receive up to \$796,299 for the local administration of subsidized child care services for the period of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.
- B) Execute future amendments for changes to revenue that do not significantly alter program requirements.

Executive Summary:

The Human Services Department requests approval of a resolution authorizing the Director to execute a contract and associated amendments with the California Department of Education (CDE)/Early Education and Support Division (EESD) for the period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. A resolution to accept the funding is required by the California Department of Education. The contract amount of \$796,299 must be used to administer child care subsidy payments to child care providers that provide care to children whose families are involved in the Child Welfare System. Additional amendments to the contract may augment the amount of revenue received and would not change any program requirements or other provisions in the contract.

Discussion:

The Human Services Department (HSD) - Division of Family Youth & Children (FY&C) Child Care Program offers limited child care subsidies to families involved with Child Protective Services (CPS). Priority for subsidy is given to families with an active Family Maintenance or Family Reunification case, foster youth seeking care for children of their own, and relatives caring for children with active CPS cases. For families who are eligible through the Bridge Program, which is another child care subsidy program funded through the California Department of Social Services, priority is given to resource families, licensed/certified foster family homes, approved homes of relatives, nonrelative extended family members, parenting foster youth or non-minor dependent parents. The goal of the program is to provide families with short-term, emergency child care while helping them access longer-term child care through other community-based child care programs. This critical support allows families the time and flexibility to complete their parenting goals and other commitments while their child is cared for in a safe setting. The program is structured in alignment with the California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) regulations, which are administered through the California Department of Education.

For Fiscal Year 2019-2020, the contract with the California Department of Education Alternative Payment Child Care Program provides \$796,299 for child care subsidies specifically for child welfare clients who need child care in order to meet the requirements of their case plan. This funding has been received annually from the California Department of Education (CDE) since 1974. The amount is set by the State; HSD does not anticipate spending the entire amount because services are provided only to families with active child welfare cases; all families who have child welfare cases and need child care will have the opportunity to use the subsidy.

Alternative Payment funding is the largest source of revenue that HSD receives for the Child Care Support Program. Approximately \$300,000 in additional funding for the Bridge Program portion of the Child Care Support Program is provided by the California Department of Social Services and is used to subsidize child care for relatives and other caregivers who need child care in order to care for a foster child.

The number of families who receive subsidies through the Child Care Support Program has nearly tripled in the last five years. Funding has increased consistently and Alternative Payment funding has gone up from an average of \$275,000 annually to \$796,299 for FY 19-20. The funding amount is determined by the CDE, based on state-identified population needs and income. In FY 18-19, 211 Sonoma County children from 158 families were able to use up to one year of subsidized child care at a provider of their choice.

Beyond providing financial assistance for child care, the Human Services Child Care Support Program has a goal of increasing parental understanding of and involvement in a child's child care experience. The program provides resources about child care and childhood development to parents and resource families. HSD has partnered with the Community Child Care Council to provide individualized education and assistance to help parents and caregivers find quality child care that meets their specific family needs around location, hours and program type.

Another goal of the Child Care Support Program is to build effective community partnerships to help families transition to long-term subsidized child care. Human Services Child Care Support Program staff work collaboratively with other child care agencies to raise awareness of the needs of families involved with CPS. Staff add families to the Centralized Eligibility List, a waiting list for all state and federally funded child care programs in Sonoma County, and provide information and referrals to help families access long-term, affordable child care. When other child care programs enroll families involved with CPS from the Centralized Eligibility List, families transition to longer term subsidy programs that help them maintain stability in their child care arrangements for as long as they need the child care. Last year, 73 Sonoma County families or 110 children were enrolled in a longer-term child care support program through the Community Child Care Council or another community-based child care provider - a 33% increase from the prior fiscal year.

Summary of Fiscal Year 2018-19 Child Care Support Program Self-Evaluation

In order to comply with State requirements, the Child Care Support Program is responsible for completing an annual in-depth self-evaluation of the program. The Self-Evaluation is reported to the California Department of Education to demonstrate that the Department is monitoring itself in the use of the funding and ensuring that program requirements are being met. The evaluation must be presented to the Board of Supervisors; however, the Board is not required to take formal action to accept it. In Spring 2019, a self-evaluation team comprised of HSD fiscal and program management, supervisory and line staff, randomly selected and reviewed 36% of the Child Care Support Program's provider and family files to ensure compliance with established

policies, procedures, and state and federal regulations in FY 18-19. Applicable sections of the Early Education and Support Division Alternative Payment Monitoring Review Checklist were used for each file review. Areas of review included attendance, completion of required application documents, Notice of Action forms, correspondence with families and child providers, and other items as outlined in the checklist.

The monitoring reviews demonstrated that, overall, the program is in compliance and successful in its administration of child care subsidies. Minor findings were cited in a percentage of the files and corrective action plans have been developed and put into place to address these findings. For example, ethnicity and race is required on the application, but is not always entered by social workers when the form is filled out with the parent. In the future, HSD staff will ensure the information is completed on the application before approving child care services.

A key component of the self-evaluation is a parent survey, and in April 2019 a survey was sent out to 128 parents/caregivers who received child care services through the HSD-FYC Child Care Program in FY 18-19. There were a total of fifteen responses to the survey which is a response rate of 12% (a typical response rate for this program). Parents/caregivers who responded to the survey were satisfied with the quality of the program and indicated that having free child care helped them achieve their child welfare case plan goals. One parent shared, "I wouldn't have been able to maintain a job, or my living situation without the child care. It was vital to our family reunification." Another caregiver wrote, "This is truly an amazing service/benefit for foster families. The immersion for my child into a social atmosphere with her peers has helped her gain knowledge and awareness of social appropriateness. It has also provided our family with the ability to not have to stress about appropriate and consistent child care. Thank you for providing this service!"

A summary of the self-evaluation process, findings and corrective actions is included as an attachment to this report, along with the contract with the California Department of Education.

Prior Board Actions:

February 5, 2019: The Board of Supervisors approved a Budget Resolution and contract amendment to accept additional revenue and expanded use of child care subsidies through the Alternative Payment Program for FY 2018-2019.

August 7, 2018: The Board of Supervisors approved agreement for Child Care Services with the California Department of Education for FY 2018-2019.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$796,299		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$796,299		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$796,299		
Fees/Other			

Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$796,299		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This contract provides additional revenue solely for the purposes of providing subsidies for child care for families involved with Child Welfare Services. This appropriation is included in the Human Services Department FY 19-20 approved budget. There is no local match required to access these funds.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

- Resolution
- Summary of 2018-2019 Child Care Program Self-Assessment

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

- Agreement with the California Department of Education
- 2018-2019 Child Care Program Self-Evaluation Process (Completed Form Submitted to the State)