



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0030, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services Department
Staff Name and Phone Number: Karen Fies, 565-6990
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Human Services Department Budget Amendment and Position Allocation

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt a Resolution adjusting the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget due to unanticipated increases to revenues and reimbursements, and increase expenditure appropriations due to the increased state and federal funding allocations of \$1,488,142.
- B) Adopt a Resolution amending the Human Service Department's position allocations by 20.0 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) effective February 25, 2020 financed with increased ongoing revenues and reimbursements.

(4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

The Human Services Department is tasked with providing multiple state and federally mandated services that support the most vulnerable residents in our community. Due to increased caseloads and state priorities, state funding allocations for Medi-Cal and CalWORKS Housing Support Program have increased. These increases will help support the programs in Human Services to meet the growing needs of our community populations.

HSD is requesting increased expenditure authority within the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget in the amount of \$1,488,142, with an ongoing cost of \$3,686,385, and an addition of 20.0 FTE position allocations to allow for the use of increased ongoing funding to expand service delivery. Additional staffing will allow the department to keep up with growing community demand, comply with legislative mandates, decrease workers' caseload sizes, and reduce customer wait times. Successful delivery of social services programs positively impacts other departments across the County and strengthens the safety net for our community. Adding the additional staff to Human Services will allow the department to more effectively provide benefits to the community through Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and housing support resources for the homeless.

Discussion:

The County of Sonoma through its Human Services Department (HSD) delivers safety net services and programs that support the health, safety and well-being of all county residents. Every day Human Services programs benefit well over 100,000 individuals, including seniors, veterans, adults, children and people with disabilities.

Programs within Human Services, mandated by the state and/or federal government, continue to grow. In an

effort to keep up with the constant demand for services across HSD programs, it is necessary to staff for the substantial needs of the community. Due to an increase in state funding allocations, HSD is able to fund additional staff positions in the Economic Assistance and Employment and Training divisions.

HSD is requesting 20.0 FTE positions, all of which will expand current capacity to provide services to the community. In reference to the Board's declaration of a homeless emergency on December 17, 2019, the requested positions will provide services that directly tie into the countywide efforts to support homeless residents across the county. The additional position allocations will better position HSD to carry out its responsibility to provide crucial safety net services to Sonoma County's most vulnerable populations, as summarized below.

1. Economic Assistance Division - 16.0 FTE Requested

Medi-Cal

Human Services currently serves over 107,000 Medi-Cal recipients in Sonoma County, comprising approximately 20% of the county's total population. Prior to the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2014, there were just over 65,000 individuals on Medi-Cal in Sonoma County. The Medi-Cal program has mandated performance standards to ensure timely and accurate processing of benefits, and failure to comply with these standards may result in reduced state funding. Sonoma County is struggling to meet performance standards for Medi-Cal as current staffing levels are inadequate to keep up with the increased caseloads. In addition, mandated changes are coming to the Medi-Cal program that will expand services, requiring more staff to successfully serve additional recipients. As of January 1, 2020, a new law in California expanded full scope Medi-Cal to young adults under the age of 26 regardless of immigration status. The work of Medi-Cal eligibility staff supports homeless efforts by providing medical coverage to low-income residents, enabling them to access physical and mental health care services.

CalFresh

Human Services currently serves approximately 30,000 individuals in the CalFresh program, which is a 29% increase compared to the approximately 23,000 individuals receiving CalFresh in 2009. As of June 1, 2019, CalFresh eligibility was expanded to include recipients of Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP). Recipients of SSI/SSP are primarily elderly and disabled individuals, who often require extra assistance to address their complex needs. In Sonoma County, an estimated 3,500 low-income households may be affected by this expansion.

In addition, the federal government has decided to do away with an existing waiver that allowed individuals to receive CalFresh benefits without having a work requirement. Starting in April 2020, able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) must comply with strict work requirements to be eligible for CalFresh. Sonoma County has identified 3,700 potential individuals subject to the ABAWD time limit. The newly reinstated eligibility requirements will increase application and renewal processing time and increase complexity of the workload. Staff will have to evaluate work requirements for individuals and track adherence to those requirements to ensure compliance, which is not currently part of the CalFresh eligibility process.

Although there was an addition of 6.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist positions in July 2019, the Economic Assistance division has been understaffed for years and unable to keep up with the significant increase in the overall workload of Medi-Cal and CalFresh cases since the affordable Care Act went into effect. Currently, HSD is not able to meet three of the five state mandated processing timelines for CalFresh benefits, and the department is not meeting the state mandated timeline for processing Medi-Cal applications. The work of CalFresh eligibility staff supports homeless efforts by providing money for food to low-income residents, enabling them to have more income for other necessary expenses such as housing.

Due to increasing caseload sizes and mandated changes in both the Medi-Cal and CalFresh programs, HSD is requesting the following 16.0 FTE positions to support the programs: **a) 2.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist Supervisor; b) 2.0 FTE Senior Eligibility Specialist; c) 8.0 FTE Eligibility Specialist II; d) 2.0 FTE Program Planning and Evaluation Analyst; e) 1.0 FTE Senior Office Assistant; and f) 1.0 FTE**

Office Assistant II.

Funding for the 16.0 FTE positions in EA is covered 100% (\$2,300,000 annually) by Medi-Cal baseline and augmented allocations from the State.

2. Employment & Training Division - 4.0 FTE Requested

CalWORKs Program

Human Services currently serves over 1,400 families in the SonomaWORKs program. Effective this fiscal year, a new mandatory state requirement was added to the program requiring all counties to satisfy the requirements of the California Outcomes and Accountability Review System (CalOAR). The new CalOAR framework requires more staff time to collect and report additional data and gather stakeholder feedback. HSD is requesting **a) 1.0 FTE** Administrative Aide to provide administrative support, data reporting, and assistance with stakeholder feedback to the CalOAR management lead.

The budgeting methodology for CalWORKs employment services was revised to account for the prevalence of very high-barrier individuals currently participating in the program. As such, the CalWORKs funding allocation was increased to reflect the more time-intensive nature of the current caseload. The new budget methodology acknowledges that caseloads with intensive cases should be reduced, which necessitates adding staff to reduce the current per worker caseload. Employment and Training Directors from the Bay Area have suggested that the best practice would be a caseload of no more than 20 families if carrying the most intensive cases. More staff are needed to reduce the current caseloads from 25 to around 20. The work of SonomaWORKs staff supports homeless efforts by providing cash benefits and employment services to low-income families, enabling them to have more income for other expenses such as housing. HSD is requesting **b) 1.0 FTE** Employment & Training Counselor to support employment services and provide more staff time for intensive caseloads in the CalWORKs program.

CalWORKs Housing Support Program

The Housing Support Program (HSP) funding allocation nearly doubled in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 over the prior fiscal year, from \$1,219,825 to \$2,248,006. Administration of the HSP program is now provided almost entirely in-house, and the division has taken steps to restructure services to provide the intensive case management necessary to effectively and permanently house 90-100 homeless families this year. HSP funding pays for the services associated with temporary shelter while seeking permanent housing, case management, supportive services, and the costs of permanent housing for up to 12 months while a family gets their income supports established. We have moved four existing counselor positions to work as housing case managers. We do not have adequate administrative staff, including an appropriate level manager, to manage, lead and support the complexity and urgency of administering a housing program. Since the housing program is part of the larger CalWORKs program, we are able to supplement direct services staff time with other CalWORKs funding. HSD is requesting **c) 1.0 FTE** Human Services Aide and **d) 1.0 FTE** Program Development Manager to support expansion of the CalWORKs HSP.

HSD will use most of the increase in allocation for direct client services, including temporary emergency housing, financial assistance, and rent subsidies. A portion of the HSP funding will be used to extend an existing time limited 1.0 FTE Leased Housing Negotiator/Inspector (housing navigator) position within the Community Development Commission, which was previously paid for with grant funding through December 31, 2019. Extension of the existing position was approved by the Board on December 17, 2019. The HSP funds

extend the position from January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022. (\$149,859 per year for three years for a total of \$449,577).

Funding for the 4.0 FTE positions in E&T is covered 100% (\$1,400,000 annually) by CalWORKs baseline and augmented Housing Support Program allocation from the State.

Prior Board Actions:

July 09, 2019: Approval of Housing Support Program Positions

June 14, 2019: Approval of HSD Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$3,686,385	\$3,774,177
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$1,488,142		
Total Expenditures	\$1,488,142	\$3,686,385	\$3,774,177
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$1,488,142	\$3,686,385	\$3,774,177
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,488,142	\$3,686,385	\$3,774,177

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Year 1 costs in FY 19-20 are prorated from February 2020 onward based on the Board approval date. Year 2 costs in FY 20-21 are full-year costs and include the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

- Ongoing increase in Medi-Cal program allocation to the County will cover the requested 16.0 FTEs in the Economic Assistance Division in Year 1 worth \$865,000 and \$2,300,000 in Year 2 going forward.
- Ongoing increase in CalWORKs allocation will cover the requested 4.0 FTEs in the Employment & Training division in Year 1 worth \$622,000 and \$1.4 million in Year 2 going forward.

No additional County General Fund is requested to fund any of the requested positions.

Staffing Impacts - HSD:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Administrative Aide	\$4,576.01 - 5,562.18	1.00	
Program Development Manager	\$7,544.94 - 9,171.15	1.00	

Eligibility Specialist I/II	\$4,422.96 - 5,376.07	8.00	
Eligibility Specialist Supervisor	\$5,250.85 - 6,383.11	2.00	
Office Assistant II	\$3,184.60 - 3,871.61	1.00	
Program Planning & Evaluation Analyst	\$6,228.21 - 7,569.29	2.00	
Senior Eligibility Specialist	\$4,772.55 - 5,800.45	2.00	
Senior Office Assistant	\$3,628.11 - 4,410.78	1.00	
Employment & Training Counselor II	\$3,628.11 - 4,410.78	1.00	
Human Services Aide II	\$3,386.35 - 4,115.11	1.00	
		20.00	

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The staffing impacts were described in the narrative of this Board item. HSD requests to add the following 20.0 FTEs:

Economic Assistance - 16.0

Employment & Training - 4.0

Attachments:

1. Budget Resolution
2. Position Resolution

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

None