



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0973, **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

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

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 Social Services for Human Services to receive \$934,747 for the local administration of subsidized child care services for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.
- B) Execute future amendments to the contract with the California Department of Social Services 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 Social Services for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. A resolution to accept the funding is required. The funding 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/or the contract period and would not change any program requirements or other provisions in the contract.

Discussion:

The Human Services Department - Family, Youth & Children's Services operates a Child Care Support Program and provides child care subsidies to families involved with Child Protective Services. The Child Care Support Program is funded through two contracts - one for the Alternative Payment Child Care Program and the other through the Child Care Bridge Program.

The Alternative Payment program allows parents to choose their own child care provider and then subsidizes the cost of child care by paying the child care provider directly. This contract was previously administered through the California Department of Education; that responsibility has now shifted to the California Department of Social Services, effective July 1, 2021. For Fiscal Year 2021-2022, the contract with the California Department of Social Services provides \$934,747 in funding for the Alternative Payment Child Care Program. No significant changes have been made to requirements, funding levels or prioritization of families as a result of this transition.

Priority for the 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 child welfare cases. This program provides child care subsidies specifically for child welfare clients who need child care in order to meet the requirements of their case plan. Funding for this program has been received annually since 1974, and the amount is set by the State. The Department does not anticipate spending the entire amount because services are provided only to families with active child welfare cases who require access to the childcare subsidy. The Alternative Payment funding is the largest source of revenue that the Department receives for the Child Care Support Program.

A second component of the Division's Child Care Support Program is the Child Care Bridge contract funded through the California Department of Social Services. This program is for eligible families, with priority given to resource families, licensed/certified foster family homes, approved homes of relatives, nonrelative extended family members, parenting foster youth and non-minor dependent parents. The total allocation is \$362,889 and does not require Board action.

The funding through the Division's Child Care Support Program has more than quadrupled in the last five years. Available funding from both the Alternative Payment and Bridge Contract totals nearly \$1.3 million for FY 2021-2022. The average child care subsidy provided per child is estimated at \$6,300 per year. In FY 2020-2021, 163 Sonoma County children from 131 families received subsidized child care services, reflecting a 25-30% decrease in utilization compared to the prior year, likely due to the pandemic. It is expected that as the pandemic continues in the current fiscal year, the number of families using the subsidy may increase from last year but remain lower than usual.

The Child Care Support Program has three primary goals. The first is to provide families with short-term child care while helping them access longer-term child care through other community-based child care providers. This critical support allows families the time and flexibility to complete their parenting goals and other court ordered case plan services while their child is cared for in a safe setting.

The second goal of the program is to increase parental understanding of, and involvement in, their child's care experience. The program provides resources about child care and childhood development to parents and resource families. Human Services has partnered with the Community Child Care Council (4C's) to provide individualized education and assistance to help parents and caregivers find quality child care that meets their specific family need around location, hours and program type. Finally, the third 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 child welfare. Staff add families to the Centralized Eligibility List, which is a wait 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 child welfare 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, 21 children from 18 Sonoma County families were enrolled in long-term child care through the 4Cs or other community-based child care providers. This number is also lower than in year's past because of state requirements to offer child care openings first to essential workers during the COVID pandemic. In FY 2018-2019, considered a typical fiscal year, 110 children from 73 families were enrolled in long-term child care.

Summary of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 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 and sharing it with the appropriate governing body. The self-evaluation is reported to the California Department of Education to demonstrate that Human Services is monitoring itself in the use of the funding and ensuring that program requirements are being met. In early 2021, a self-evaluation team comprised of Human Services fiscal and division management, supervisory and line staff, randomly selected and reviewed 51% (19) of 37 children listed on the state report for November payments to ensure compliance with established policies, procedures, and state and federal regulations. Applicable sections of the Early Education and Support Division Alternative Payment Monitoring Review Checklist were used for each file review. Items requiring corrective action included communicating with providers around the availability of direct deposit and payment timelines, as well as needing to ensure that immunization and physical records for each enrolled child were maintained as part of the administrative file. These three items were corrected as of July 1, 2021.

Prior Board Actions:

September 1, 2020: The Board of Supervisors approved an agreement for Child Care Services with the California Department of Education for FY 2020-2021.

August 6, 2019: The Board of Supervisors approved an agreement for Child Care Services with the California Department of Education for FY 2019-2020.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$500,000	\$934,747	\$934,747
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$500,000	\$934,747	\$934,747
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$500,000	\$934,747	\$934,747
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$500,000	\$934,747	\$934,747

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This contract provides revenue solely for the purpose of providing child care subsidies to families involved with Child Welfare Services. This appropriation is already included in the Human Services Department’s (HSD) FY 2021-2022 adopted budget. Based on past utilization, HSD has budgeted \$500K of the revenue because services are provided only to families with active child welfare cases who require access to the childcare subsidy. There is a county local match required of \$7,662 - paid with 2011 Realignment - to draw down these state funds. As long as HSD pays this minimum amount as specified in the Maintenance of Effort section of the agreement, this program will continue to receive state funding for the foreseeable future.

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- Resolution

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

- Agreement with the California Department of Social Services
- Summary of Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Child Care Program Self-Assessment