

Sheila de la Guerra

Public Comment

From: Erica Jane Flores <ericaf@syvphp.org>
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2026 7:27 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment: FY 26-27 Budget Workshops - DSS | From Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People
Attachments: Public Comment from Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People on BOS Budget Workshop 2026.pdf
Importance: High

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Good morning,

On behalf of Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People, please accept the attached letter as public comment regarding the County of Santa Barbara's budget hearings for FY 26-27, specifically related to the Department of Social Services budget.

As outlined in the attached, I urge the Board of Supervisors to take action to ensure continued funding for critical safety net services, especially the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) contract.

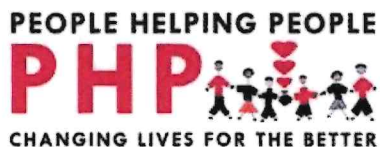
Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to the wellbeing of children and families across Santa Barbara County.

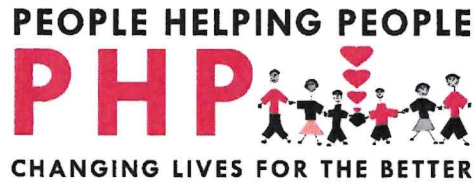
Erica

Erica Jane Flores
Chief Executive Officer

**Santa Ynez Valley
People Helping People**
E: ericaf@syvphp.org
P: (805) 686-0295 ext 106

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April 17, 2026

Dear Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing on behalf of Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People regarding the upcoming fiscal year budget workshops, specifically the proposed Department of Social Services (DSS) budget.

I recognize this is an especially challenging budget year and appreciate the difficult decisions before you. As you navigate these tradeoffs, I respectfully ask that you consider the essential role community-based organizations play in partnership with DSS, particularly in delivering child abuse prevention and early intervention services.

People Helping People serves as a trusted access point for individuals and families across the Santa Ynez Valley, providing integrated support that includes basic needs, case management, and connections to health and social services. This work is rooted in prevention, meeting families where they are before challenges escalate into crisis.

I am writing to express concern regarding the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) contract, a collaborative partnership among Family Service Agency, People Helping People, Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center, LEAP, and CALM. This contract, in the amount of \$546,667, is foundational to our region's prevention infrastructure, connecting families to food, housing support, parenting resources, and behavioral health services.

In the Santa Ynez Valley, geographic isolation and limited access to services already create significant barriers for families. The loss of prevention funding would have an immediate and disproportionate impact, particularly as we are already seeing increased need among households facing housing instability, economic pressure, and behavioral health challenges. Prevention services are not easily replaced. When they are reduced, the consequences are felt downstream in more intensive and costly systems.

My connection to this work is also personal. I first walked through our doors as a client. Today, I serve as CEO. I share this because I am not only advocating on behalf of our community, I am speaking from lived experience about the impact of having access to timely, compassionate support during moments of need.

Given the importance of this work, and the absence of this funding in the current DSS budget documents, I **respectfully urge the Board to identify a pathway to continue investing in CANP and the collaborative network it sustains.**

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to the wellbeing of children and families across Santa Barbara County.

Sincerely,

Erica Jane Flores, CEO