

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 10/8/01
Department Name: Child Support Services
Department No.: 045
Agenda Date: 12/11/01
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time:
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Karin Roser
Department of Child Support Services

STAFF CONTACT: Marc Levine
2329

SUBJECT: Acceptance of State Department of Child Support Services Enhanced Funding for Statewide Initiatives

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the acceptance and expenditure of \$299,238 from the State Department of Child Support Services for the purpose of targeting specified Statewide Initiatives.
- b) Adopt a personnel resolution effective December 10, 2001
Adding:
Four (4.0 FTE) Child Support Officers, Supervising positions-Range 539 (\$3568-\$4355)

Effective March 4, 2002
Deleting:
Special Duty Pay of 5% for one (1) Child Support Officer, Senior
- c) Approve the attached Budget Revision Request increasing appropriations by \$299,238 for Fiscal Year 2001-02.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

This recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal #7-A Community that Fosters the Safety and Well-being of Families and Children.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The State Department of Child Support Services has authorized additional funding, based on caseload and staffing ratios, for what the State has deemed critically important Statewide Initiatives. The additional amount authorized for Santa Barbara County is \$299,238. Three areas identified for increased focus in FY 01-02 are Training, Quality Assurance and Program Improvement, and Customer and Community Outreach. The State Department of Child Support Services has begun to develop statewide programs in each of these three focus areas.

In the first focus area, training, it is the intention of the State to lead and manage the Statewide Child Support Training Program. With this move to a standardized, Statewide curriculum for Child Support staff, it is anticipated that the workload of training staff will likely increase. The duties of training staff will include organizing, scheduling, and delivering training, as well as evaluating training outcomes and monitoring and ensuring staff participation in required training programs. Another anticipated task will be to participate as needed in state-level training activities including needs assessments and curriculum development. To address this increased workload, one staff position (Child Support Officer, Senior) will be shifted to the training unit.

The second focus area of Quality Assurance and Program Improvement is related to efforts on the part of the State Department of Child Support Services and Local Child Support Agencies to improve performance statewide in the five Federal Performance Measures and in the nine State Performance Measures created by State statute. The statewide performance in the five Federal Performance Measures is critical, because it ultimately impacts the amount of Federal incentives passed through the State for the funding of the local programs. The Essential elements of the Quality Assurance and Program Improvement component will include the development of related performance improvement action plans targeting specific data sets that are indicative of program performance. The current ratio of Child Support Officers I/II to Child Support Officers, Supervising is already quite high in our Santa Maria and Santa Barbara Branch Offices (one to twenty-six in Santa Maria and one to nineteen in Santa Barbara). This ratio does not provide adequate supervisory staff to meet the projected assessment and monitoring necessary to facilitate the new direction of the State Department of Child Support Services. To address these increased expectations and workload, two additional Child Support Officer, Supervising positions will be added to the Department. These two new positions will provide quality assurance and direct supervision to line child support officers in our two largest branch offices.

The third target area is Customer and Community Outreach. Initial efforts in this area have focused on outreach related to implementation of the Local Complaint Resolution and State Hearing Process. Future efforts envision a broader approach to identification of and interaction with all stakeholders associated with the Child Support Program. The State Department of Child Support Services plans to implement a uniform statewide approach to Customer and Community Outreach, which will allow for local variation as appropriate to meet local customer and community needs. In the area of Customer and Community Service, the position presently dedicated to the State mandated Ombudsperson duties will be upgraded from a Child Support Officer, Senior to a Child Support Officer, Supervising. The six-month pilot of this position has indicated that the level of decision-making and responsibility, especially as it relates to reviewing, evaluating, directing and correcting the work of line staff, requires a supervisory status. The Child Support Officer, Senior position currently fulfilling the Ombudsperson duties will be the previously mentioned Senior position that will be shifted to the training unit. Additionally, a one-time expenditure of \$18,590 in

postage expenses will provide for a mass mailing to advise clients of new customer services that are available.

It is anticipated that there will also be a reporting and procedural development component associated with these new focus areas identified by the State Department of Child Support Services. Countywide coordination will also become more critical between the training unit and the quality assurance area. To accommodate these increased workloads, a Child Support Officer, Supervising will be added to the Department. This staff will have countywide responsibility and will act in a liaison capacity with the State in these newly identified focus areas.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The State Department of Child Support Services has provided an additional funding allocation to provide the Local Child Support Agencies with the resources and capacity to be responsive to their directives in the areas of Training, Quality Assurance and Program Improvement, and Customer and Community Outreach. This is in line with the legislative mandate for the State Department of Child Support Services to develop uniform policies and procedures to be employed statewide by all local child support agencies.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There is no fiscal impact to the County General Fund since the State has allocated full funding for the additional positions. The additional funding for staffing in FY 01-02 will be \$152,028 in salaries and benefits, and \$5,980 in services and supplies. Concerning the facilities impact, the Santa Maria Branch Office is currently operating under cramped conditions. Also, at this time there is no space to accommodate mandatory staff trainings or meetings, nor a conference room available for the purpose of holding State Hearings. To address our current needs, as well as additional space for new staff, discussions related to the acquisition of approximately 1720 square feet, which has just become available in the same complex as our current office, are underway. The Real Property Unit in the General Services Department is working with us on this project which will be brought back to your Board when finalized, most likely in February, 2002. Funding for this additional space will not impact the County General Fund because it has been included in the State allocation for these new initiatives. We anticipate occupancy of the additional space in March, 2002 and estimate that the additional space cost for FY 01-02 will be \$9,700. One time costs associated with the postage expenditures for a mass mailing, additional staffing, and space acquisition total \$131,530. All costs associated with the additional staff and space remain within the additional allocation of \$299,238 for FY 2001-02. In FY 02-03, estimated costs for the additional positions is \$262,000 for salaries and benefits, \$27,900 for newly acquired space, and other associated costs of \$17,900.

Although it may seem counter-intuitive to add new positions in light of the State fiscal problems, the State Department of Child Support Services has indicated that it is their intent to continue funding these focus areas in future annual allocations. At present, they are aggressively moving forward with their initiatives in these focus areas and continue to encourage county programs to develop the resources necessary to meet these new directives. The State Department of Child Support Services has also indicated that any funds that they have allocated to Local Child Support Agencies, which are not in turn authorized for expenditure, may be subject to reallocation to Local Child Support Agencies in other counties. This reallocation would not

relieve any responsibility for complying with directives related to Quality Assurance and Program Improvement, Training, or Customer and Community Outreach.

Special Instructions:

None

Concurrence:

County Administrative Office, Auditor Controller, Personnel