



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Social Services
Department No.: 044
For Agenda Of: 5/3/16
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Daniel Nielson, Social Services Director
Director(s) (805) 346-7101
Contact Info: Rene Garcia, Operations Division Chief, Employment Services
Branch (805) 681-4540

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding with California Department of Social Services for the County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services access to The Work Number for Online Employment and Wage Verification Services

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

- a) Approve and authorize the County of Santa Barbara Department of Social Services (DSS) Director, or designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) (Attachment 1), for the purpose of authorizing County access to TALX's on-line employment verification service ("The Work Number®"), pursuant to the Agreement between CDSS and Equifax/TALX Corporation through September 30, 2017 (Attachment 2); and
- b) Authorize the DSS Director, or designee, to execute extensions of the term of this MOU; and
- c) Determine that the execution of the MOU is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3), finding that the execution of the MOU is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment, and where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment, the activities are not subject to CEQA.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda in order to approve the MOU between the DSS and CDSS to allow DSS staff access to The Work Number service to retrieve and verify certain employment and/or income data of a consumer-recipient applying for or currently receiving public social service assistance where such information has been furnished to the TALX Corporation (an independent contractor of CDSS) by employers. This MOU is necessary for DSS employees to access The Work Number for purposes of determining eligibility, prevention or identification of fraud, or overpayments associated with receipt of public assistance. DSS recommends approving the MOU.

Background:

The Work Number is the largest source for past and/or current employment and wage verification in the country. The Work Number Express Service by the Equifax subsidiary TALX Corporation is an online employment and income verification system based on social security numbers which became available to all 58 California counties in a pilot program starting January 1, 2015. CDSS has entered into an Agreement with TALX to formalize the pilot program and continue to provide Work Number services statewide. The current pilot program expired on March 31, 2016, but counties that participate in the MOU will have access through September 30, 2017. The term of this MOU shall commence when executed through September 30, 2017.

The pilot program has been providing quick access to an industry standard verification system that allows designated DSS staff to log into a secure website and retrieve information instantly. The Work Number service then provides critical employment verification data such as employee earnings and hours worked in accordance with the California Work Verification Plan approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACT) on October 8, 2008. Without access to the Work Number data, DSS has no other method of verification for employment or income other than the information provided by the client.

This program has proven to be a benefit to clients who have difficulty obtaining employment verification. An increasing number of businesses utilize Work Number for employment verification and do not provide this information any other way. The inability to otherwise verify employment or income data leaves open the possibility that benefits are being paid out incorrectly.

CDSS will provide full funding for the use of The Work Number. There will be no charge to use the service as an authorized user under the MOU. The MOU provided by CDSS as part of its Agreement with TALX cannot be altered or amended. If the Board does not approve the MOU, DSS will lose its access to independently verify employment and income information in compliance with the state's Work Verification Plan at this time.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Narrative:

There are no fiscal or facilities impacts as there are no associated costs to the County.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

FTEs:

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Special Instructions:

Please email scanned copy of minute order to: Tricia Beebe at t.beebe@sbcsocialserv.org

Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 – Agreement for the Work Number Social Services - 15-STD-00907 CDSS-TALX Corporation
2. Attachment 2 – MOU between DSS and CDSS for CDSS Work Number Express

Authored by:

Tricia Beebe, Contracts Coordinator

Rene Garcia, Operations Division Chief, Employment Services Branch