



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

NATHAN FLETCHER
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: April 26, 2022

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

APPROVE AND RATIFY THE CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND THREE-YEAR FUNDING PROPOSAL (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken a strong leadership role in supporting efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect. The efforts focus on strengthening families by identifying and addressing the needs of children and youth who are in the public charge as well as those whose safety and welfare may be at risk. On March 26, 2019 (11), the Board adopted Ordinance No. 10598 (N.S.) repealing and replacing provisions in the San Diego County Administrative Code to establish the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County (Advisory Board).

The Advisory Board is charged with recommending funding proposals for the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. The CTF consists of funding from birth certificate receipts, license plate fees, child maltreatment court restitution fines, Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds and grants, and gifts or bequests from private sources. California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18966 directs the CTF to be used for child maltreatment prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. On June 23, 2020 (6) the Board approved the CTF Funding Proposal for Fiscal Year 2019-20. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County (Advisory Board) CTF Funding Proposal process and delayed the development of a three-year funding proposal. However, the delay did not disrupt the service delivery of existing priorities funded by the CTF since the services are provided through current contracts with the exception of activities in support of carrying out the Advisory Board's duties and responsibilities. To ensure a plan for utilizing the CTF funding was created without further delay, an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Advisory Board was formed and tasked to develop recommendations for the CTF Three-Year Funding Proposal.

Today's action requests the Board to approve and ratify the Children's Trust Fund Three-Year Funding Proposal (CTF Funding Proposal) for Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2022-23 and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, to approve expenditures in accordance with the CTF Funding Proposal.

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This item supports the County of San Diego’s vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe and thriving communities. This will be accomplished by upholding sustainable practices to provide just and equitable access to prevention, intervention, and family strengthening services and opportunities for participation to ensure all children, families, and communities in the region flourish and thrive.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Approve and ratify the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County Children’s Trust Fund Three-Year Funding Proposal for Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2022-23.
2. Authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, to approve expenditures in accordance with the Funding Proposal approved in Recommendation 1.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 CWS received 36,042 reports of abuse and neglect to the Child Abuse Hotline, representing 62,600 children. FY 2020-21 saw an 18% decrease in reports compared to FY 2018-19 and FY 2019-20 saw a 12% decrease in reports compared to FY 2018-19. The population distribution by ethnicity of children for referrals in FY 2020-21 includes 45% Hispanic, 26% White, 10% Black, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, and 11% Other. In the last five years, as a result of sweeping statutory changes focused on keeping children safely with their families and preventing child maltreatment, the County of San Diego (County), Health and Human Services Agency, Child Welfare Services (CWS) experienced a 39% reduction in the number of youths in foster care.

The Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County (Advisory Board) was established on March 26, 2019 (11), to enhance the ability of the County to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect. The Advisory Board absorbed the duties of the Child Abuse Prevention Coordinating Council and consists of twenty-five voting members. The Advisory Board represents a broad cross-section of community and stakeholders including individuals with lived experience, resource parents, public and private child and family-serving systems, judicial, health, and education systems, and representation from Supervisorial districts and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board).

The Advisory Board serves as a platform for cross-sector collaboration and transparent monitoring and accountability of the San Diego County child welfare system to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. Monitoring activities include, but are not limited to, the review and evaluation of San Diego County’s child welfare system such as needs, trends, programs, services, facilities, activities, outcomes, and other areas including priorities, to identify gaps, support the implementation of system-wide changes, advocate on behalf of children, youth and families, and encourage active participation by child welfare system partners. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the Advisory Board include:

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- Recommend improvements in services to families and victims who are in the public charge, as well as children, youth, and families whose safety and welfare may be at risk;
- Serve as the designated child abuse prevention coordinating body and local Children's Trust Fund (CTF) body as set forth in California Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 18982 et seq. and 18965 et seq. regarding proposals to be funded by the CTF; and
- Recommend to the Board proposals that the Advisory Board agrees merit funding.

Regional engagement and collaboration with private and public sectors, stakeholders, and the community create buy-in and collective investment in prevention and family strengthening and fosters inclusive and sustainable communities. Input on proposed services and activities were gathered from the community at Advisory Board and subcommittee meetings and recommended by the Advisory Board for CTF funding to align with sustainability practices to promote equity, justice, and community with focused investment in underserved communities. Proposed services and activities are also complementary to existing services and supports that will provide an additional advantage to maximize positive impact on the County’s racial equity work.

Through Advisory Board’s recommendations for funding proposals and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors’ strong commitment to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect, CWS continues to deepen prevention and family strengthening efforts and uphold sustainable practices and services contributing to fewer youth entering into the child welfare system.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-23 Operational Plan in the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). If approved, this request will result in estimated costs and revenue of \$900,000 in FY 2021-22 and estimated costs and revenue of \$1,300,000 in FY 2022-23. The three-year funding proposal for FY 2020-21 through FY 2022-23 is an estimated total costs and revenue of \$3,100,000. The funding source is the AB 2994 Children’s Trust Fund. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

On March 11, 2022, the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County reviewed the Children’s Trust Fund Funding Proposals for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21, FY 2021-22, and FY 2022-23 that were developed by an Advisory Board workgroup for submission to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

BACKGROUND

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken a strong leadership role in supporting efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect. The efforts focus on strengthening families by identifying and addressing the needs of children and youth who are in public charge as well as those whose safety and welfare may be at risk. On March 26, 2019 (11), the Board adopted Ordinance No. 10598 (N.S.) repealing and replacing provisions in the San Diego County Administrative Code to establish the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County (Advisory Board). The Advisory Board was created to enhance the

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ability of the County of San Diego (County) to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect. The intent of the Advisory Board is to serve as a platform for cross-sector collaboration in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child maltreatment cases and support countywide activities that promote family strengthening in addition to the transparent monitoring of the County’s child welfare system.

Furthermore, the Advisory Board is charged with the oversight and planning responsibilities for the Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. The CTF consists of funding from birth certificate receipts, license plate fees, child maltreatment court restitution fines, Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds and grants, and gifts or bequests from private sources. California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 18966 directs the CTF to be used for child maltreatment prevention and intervention programs operated by private nonprofit organizations or public institutions of higher education with recognized expertise in fields related to child welfare. Following these criteria, the three-year CTF Funding Proposal for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 totaling \$900,000, FY 2021-22 totaling \$900,000, and FY 2022-23 totaling \$1,300,000 (Attachment A) was developed and brought before the Advisory Board for review on March 11, 2022 prior to final submission to the Board.

On June 23, 2020 (6) the Board approved the CTF Funding Proposal for Fiscal Year 2019-20. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County Children’s Trust Fund Three-Year Funding Proposal (CTF Funding Proposal) process and delayed the development of a three-year funding proposal. However, the delay did not disrupt the service delivery of existing priorities funded by the CTF since the services are provided through current contracts with the exception of activities in support of carrying out the Advisory Board’s duties and responsibilities. To ensure a plan for utilizing the CTF funding was created without further delay, an ad-hoc subcommittee of the Advisory Board was formed and tasked to develop recommendations for the CTF Three-Year Funding Proposal. Today’s recommended action, if approved, will approve and ratify the CTF Funding Proposal for Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2022-23 and authorize the Agency Director, Health and Human Services Agency, to approve expenditures in accordance with the CTF Funding Proposal.

The CTF Funding Proposals for FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22 recommend continued funding of \$900,000 annually for the following services and activities:

- A. *Voluntary Guardianship Services and Special Education Legal Advocacy: \$550,000*
Funds in the amount of \$550,000 were allocated to the County, Health and Human Services Agency, Child Welfare Services (CWS) for existing contracts with nonprofit providers for the continued provision of legal services to include:
- Guardianship counseling for parents;
 - Assistance to relatives with low income who seek to obtain legal guardianship of children;
 - Education and training on the guardianship and dependency court process to caregivers, agencies and organizations, and other county residents; and
 - Collaboration and/or representation of relative and non-related caregivers of youth in foster care in the areas of:
 - Special Education;

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- Compliance with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); and
- School-related disciplinary matters.

The CTF has supported these legal services since July 2012. The current contract is set to expire on June 30, 2023. Contractors have provided legal guardianship services to approximately 257 families annually and representation in special education matters to caregivers of approximately 35 youth annually. This allocation is the same as was proposed for FY 2019-20.

B. Kinship Caregiver Support: \$300,000

Funds in the amount of \$300,000 were allocated to provide primary and secondary prevention services through existing CWS contracts for Kinship Support. These funds support kinship caregivers programs and activities to include:

- Support groups for caregivers and their family members;
- Navigation services to identify caregiver needs and linkages to services and resources;
- Case management; and
- Social connection activities.

The CTF has supported caregiver support programs since July 2015. The current contract is set to expire on June 30, 2025. Approximately 240 families receive case management services and 379 families receive emergency kinship support annually. This allocation is the same as was proposed for FY 2019-20.

C. Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board: \$50,000

Funds in the amount of \$50,000 were allocated to further the mission of the Advisory Board to strengthen families and victims who are in the public charge, as well as children, youth, and families whose safety and welfare may be at risk. Activities in support of strengthening families to build thriving communities include the sponsorship of prevention and awareness campaigns in the County’s annual Summer Movies in the Park series that occurs countywide at more than 80 hosting sites and provides over one hundred screenings. Examples of campaigns presented on-screen before the featured screening include Sex Trafficking Awareness, Pool Safety, and Resource Family recruitment for siblings and special populations.

In the summer of 2021, 21,000 residents and visitors attended 128 events including six virtual movies and three drive-in events. Events took place in 94 different parks serving 59 San Diego County communities; including 45 events in 23 County parks. The CTF has supported family strengthening and prevention campaigns at the County’s Summer Movies in the Park series since summer 2010. This allocation has been adjusted down from the previous allocation of \$200,000 to align with the current funding utilization.

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The CTF Funding Proposal for FY 2022-23 recommends funding of \$1,300,000 for the following services and activities:

A. Voluntary Guardianship Services and Special Education Legal Advocacy: \$550,000 - Ongoing

Funds in the amount of \$550,000 will be allocated to CWS for the current contract with a nonprofit provider for the continued provision of legal services and special education representation. This allocation is the same as was proposed for FY 2021-22.

B. Kinship Caregiver Support: \$400,000 - Increased from \$300,000

Funds in the amount of \$400,000 will be allocated to CWS for the current Kinship Support contract to continue efforts supporting Kinship caregivers programs and activities. This allocation is an increase of \$100,000 to expand the current contract to increase the reach of services and resources to formal and informal Kinship families and bolster community support and connections with an emphasis on Kinship families of color residing in under-resourced communities. The expansion of services aims to enhance family finding services, expedite the delivery of services to Kinship caregivers upon placements, and provide critical tangible supports needed to secure and maintain safe and stable placements with Kinship families.

C. Pre-Petition Legal Advocacy: \$300,000 – New Priority

Funds in the amount of \$300,000 will be allocated to CWS to contract with providers for the provision of pre-petition legal advocacy for families interacting with CWS and not in an open case. These funds will provide legal services to parents in an effort to mitigate safety concerns and prevent the need for children to enter foster care. Legal services may include but are not limited to:

- Assistance in filing restraining orders;
- Amending Family Court custody orders;
- Obtaining IEPs from schools to support the provision of school-based mental health treatment; and
- Establishing legal guardianship with a relative through Probate Court.

This allocation is in direct alignment with the CWS Working Group Recommendation (#23) to explore the provision of court-appointed legal services to children as well as parents who are diverted to Probate Court. This is a new allocation proposed for FY 2022-23; at which time the procurement for these services is anticipated to begin.

D. Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board: \$50,000 - Ongoing

Funds in the amount of \$50,000 will be allocated for qualifying child abuse prevention promotional events, materials, and communication.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed actions support the County of San Diego’s (County) 2022-2027 Strategic Plan Initiatives of Sustainability (Economy and Resiliency), Equity (Health), Empower (Transparency and Accountability), Community (Engagement, Quality of Life, and Communications), and Justice (Environmental) by providing increased and equitable access to prevention, intervention, and family strengthening services and supports to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families.

Respectfully submitted,



HELEN N. ROBBINS-MEYER
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board of San Diego County Children’s Trust Fund Three-Year Funding Proposal for Fiscal Years 2020-21 through 2022-23