Senate Budget and Fiscal Review—Nancy Skinner, Chair

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 3 Agenda

Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman, Ph.D, Chair
Senator Melissa Melendez
Senator Richard Pan, M.D.

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Upon Call of the Chair
State Capitol - Room 4203

Consultant: Renita Polk

AGENDA PART B

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5175 DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES (DCSS)

With a proposed 2021-22 budget of $1 billion ($333 million General Fund), the DCSS provides professional services to locate parents, establish paternity, and establish and enforce orders for financial and medical support. The department is also responsible for oversight of county and regional local child support agencies that work directly with families in the community.

Department of Child Support Services
Expenditures by Fund Source
* Dollars in thousands

Grand Total By Fund	Fiscal Year	
	2020-21	**(Proposed Budget) 2021-22**
General Fund	$315,354	$333,040
Federal Funds	$481,107	$571,172
Reimbursements	$123	$123
Child Support Collections Recovery Fund	$212,590	$157,447
Total All Funds	$1,009,174	$1,061,782

Issue 1: BCP – Child Support Payment Methodology Study

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes $750,000 ($255,000 General Fund) in 2021-22 and 2022-23 to contract for consulting services for data analytics and research to provide services to child support program participants.

Background. One of the central elements of the child support program is the establishment of "rightsized" child support orders that represent the parents' ability to financially support their child. To accomplish this task, the child support program adheres to statewide uniform guidelines. Every four years, the Judicial Council of California (JCC), in cooperation with the DCSS, reviews the statewide uniform guidance to recommend to the Legislature appropriate revisions. This review is referred to as the quadrennial review and is mandated to include economic data, such as the following:

- The cost of raising a child(ren).
- The treatment of income of a subsequent spouse or nonmarital partner.
- The treatment of children from prior or subsequent relationships.

In the JCC's report to the Legislature in the "Review of Statewide Uniform Child Support Guideline" on October 25, 2017, the JCC declared the importance of considering whether the current guideline formula calculates appropriate child support obligations. The report notes that the child support formula used today was enacted in 1993. The report also details concerns about the "K factor." The K factor identifies the proportion of income used to support children within specific income brackets. It is a critical component of the guideline calculation for setting child support orders and has been called out as an area warranting further analysis and examination. The report also stressed the importance of considering labor market data in the guideline calculations.

Currently, there are over 846,000 child support cases that have an arrears balance, of which, only 564,000 have made a payment in the last fiscal year. Many of these without collections are due to parents that earn little to no income and carry the significant majority of the total statewide arrears balance (see Figure 1 below). Furthermore, a large portion of arrears are owed as government recoupment. Although DCSS makes progress in collecting arrears, the department needs data collected and analyzed to determine if these low income parents are able to pay their arrears and if the weight of government debt can be reviewed and compromised or determined as uncollectable.

Figure 1: Total and Average Amount of Arrears Owed by Income Bracket (in thousands)

Income Brackets	Total Arrears		Average Amount	
	Government	Family	Government	Family
No Reported Income	$1,346,127,574	$1,997,006,311	$21,232	$36,189
$0.01 - $10,000 annually	$1,761,750,931	$2,553,251,099	$17,735	$28,293
$10,000 - $20,000	$1,837,938,000	$2,869,980,680	$14,327	$22,302
$20,001 - $40,000	$1,332,088,959	$2,579,666,621	$12,384	$18,157
$40,001 - $60,000	$352,160,151	$901,682,698	$14,887	$20,419
$60,001 - $80,000	$122,384,916	$360,307,422	$15,745	$20,237
$80,001 - $100,000	$46,262,640	$164,614,175	$16,464	$21,390
$100,000 +	$60,194,673	$224,240,980	$19,840	$26,929
TOTAL	$6,858,907,845	$11,650,749,985	$15,737	$23,576

In 2019-20, the Governor vetoed legislation that eliminated the collection of interest that accrues on past due child support owed to the government. The Governor instead directed DCSS to review its Compromise of Arrears Program (COAP), the state's existing child support debt reduction program, and consider any needed program changes to address uncollectable debts and increase collections. The proposed study would evaluate the current COAP eligibility criteria and suggest additional factors (such as labor market conditions, parent's ability to pay, and other individual circumstances) that could be taken into account when determining COAP eligibility.

The requested resources for consulting services would support the department request to examine the appropriateness of the K factor in the mandatory statewide guideline review as well as provide improved data insights into the collectability of child support arrears. The DCSS currently lacks the expertise to statistically analyze and forecast collectability and data on various factors that may affect income and employment.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold Open.

Part of the rationale the department gives for the proposal is that it does not have the in-house expertise to examine the appropriateness of the K factor. As discussed above, the JCC conducts a quadrennial review of statewide guidelines, including the K factor. Staff notes that there have been several studies over the years examining the K factor. The 2018 quadrennial review conducted by the JCC did not propose an update to the K-Factor, in part, because "there is no perfect model" for estimating the cost of raising children and "each [study] has its strengths and weaknesses." It is unclear to staff how the proposed study is different from what is covered in the JCC's quadrennial review. Steps should be taken to ensure that the work proposed is not duplicative of the JCC quadrennial review.

The topic of arrears debt has been of interest to the Legislature for quite some time. SB 337 (Skinner), a bill that would have reduced debt on government owed child support payments deemed to be uncollectible, was vetoed with direction from the Governor to address the issue in the budget process. The Subcommittee may want to consider other items of legislative interest to include in the study, such as the issues SB 337 focused on. Staff notes that the recent legislatively driven workgroups included discussions of ways COAP eligibility and program rules could be modified to increase compliance with child support obligations owed to families and standardize the program across all LCSAs. The Subcommittee may want to request that the department provide a study of these issues in the proposal and request a draft of the research proposal and project time line to ensure that issues of interest are included prior to approval of funding. Additionally, the Subcommittee should also consider how the Legislature will be involved in implementing results of the proposed study. The Subcommittee may want to direct the department to present the findings from the study and any proposed changes resulting from it in future budget hearings.

In 2016, the federal government issued new child support program guidance, referred to as the Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs (FEM) final rule. While the state already is in compliance with some components of the FEM final rule, it will need to make some changes to the guideline calculator to come into compliance with the new federal guidance. While originally required to be implemented by 2022, the federal government approved the state's request to extend the compliance deadline for those components until September 2024. The FEM final rule includes elements that impact child support guidelines and the state's quadrennial review process. The 2018 quadrennial review mentioned that additional research on components of the final rule, for example, whether a low-income adjustment accurately provides for the subsistence needs of parents, might be warranted. The Subcommittee could also consider using this research proposal as a vehicle to assess additional components of the FEM final rule.

Questions.

1. As detailed above, the JCC conducts a quadrennial review that includes a review of the K factor. How is the department working collaboratively with its Judicial Council partner to ensure that the proposed study is not duplicative of the JCC's quadrennial review?

2. What current and/or ongoing efforts has the department undertaken to reform its COAP program?

3. What options besides the K factor and COAP could the department consider in looking to address debt collectability?

4. How does the Administration plan to use the findings from the proposed research study?

Issue 2: BCP – Local Child Support Courts and Funding

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes $23.8 million ($8.1 million General Fund) ongoing for the Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator Assembly Bill (AB) 1058 program and for critical program staffing and information technology needs. $12 million ($4.1 million General Fund) will be used to increase the Judicial Council of California (JCC) contract, and $11.8 million ($4 million General Fund) will be used for personnel and operating costs at DCSS.

Background. A critical component of the child support program is the Child Support Commissioner (CSC) and Family Law Facilitator (FLF) Program established per AB 1058 (Speier), Chapter 957, Statutes of 1996. The purpose of the local child support court program is to provide a cost-effective, expedited, and accessible due process in the courts for establishing and enforcing child support orders for cases in which a Local Child Support Agency (LCSA) is responsible for. Each superior court is required to have a CSC to hear Title IV-D child support cases and an FLF office to provide legal assistance, forms, and information to self-represented litigants. Funds for the AB 1058 CSC and FLF program are provided through a cooperative agreement between DCSS and the JCC. The agreement designates a specific amount of funds for the CSC and FLF programs and requires the JCC to annually approve the funding allocations.

Since 2007-08, the AB 1058 program has been flat funded. Due to the program's flat funding, higher costs have resulted in reducing staffing levels. From 2014-15 to 2018-19, personnel costs have increased by more than 15 percent. As a result, the AB 1058 staff workforce has seen a 12 percent reduction.

This request would also allow DCSS to fill Information Technology (IT) positions to support its Child Support Enforcement (CSE) system and the new telework workforce. The requested funding will allow DCSS to move its CSE system into the cloud and to modernize the system to support teleworking staff.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

The 2020 budget included a reduction of $8.3 million General Fund to reduce state operation costs as part of statewide budget reductions in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This reduction was implemented via a decrease to the contract between the department and local courts and a decrease to operation costs at the department. The proposed funding would restore the reduction made to local court funding in the 2020 budget and provide an additional $1.7 million General Fund on top of that. The requested funding would not fully restore reductions made to the department's budget in 2020. Only $4 million of the $6 million reduction would be restored to the department.

Questions.

1. What is the impact of the $12 million for court funding? How many FTEs are expected to be added with this funding?

Issue 3: Local Child Support Agencies Funding Increase

Governor's Budget. The Governor's budget includes $25 million ($8.5 million General Fund) to fund basic costs at LCSAs. The additional funding would be allocated across 20 LCSAs with the highest case-to-staffing ratios as of September 2020.

Background. LCSA administration costs include salaries and benefits of county staff as well as operating costs. LCSA are responsible for case intake, court preparation to establish paternity and support obligations, and the enforcement of support obligations, including locating absent parents. LCSA administration costs are funded at $664 million for 2020-21 and $689 million for 2021-22. Funding for administration is 34 percent General Fund and 66 percent federal matching funds.

Previous Budget Actions. The topic of adequate LCSA funding has been a focus of the Subcommittee in recent years. In 2018, the budget include an additional $3 million General Fund for LCSAs as their funding levels had remained flat over several years. That same year, the Subcommittee directed the department and the LCSAs to work together to identify refinements to the existing budget methodology and identify operational efficiencies. The department submitted a report on that work to the budget committees in 2019 and the proposed 2019 Governor's budget included an ongoing funding methodology for LCSAs. The proposed funding methodology increased funding by $19.1 million in 2019-20, ramping up to $57.2 million in 2021-22.

During the 2019 budget deliberations, concerns were expressed about the inclusion of the identified operational efficiencies into the proposed funding methodology. Due to those concerns, the final 2019 budget only approved funding for the first year of the proposed funding methodology and included trailer bill language requiring the department to convene a series of stakeholder meetings to develop an ongoing funding methodology and to provide a written update to the Legislature describing recommended changes by February 1, 2020. That update was to be considered during the 2020 budget process. However, in response to the budget impacts of the COVID-19 recession the final 2020 budget reduced funding for the department and LCSAs. The 2020 budget reduced LCSA funding to 2018-19 budget levels, and the ongoing augmentation proposed in 2019 was not implemented.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

As mentioned above, the 2019 budget contained trailer bill language requiring the department to convene a series of meetings to develop an ongoing funding methodology to be considered during the 2020 budget deliberations. However, that discussion was tabled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As that ongoing methodology has not been implemented the Subcommittee may want to revisit the child support funding structure and consider already identified program efficiencies and other policy changes to improve program operations before making further augmentations. Some of those program efficiencies include the consolidation of casework by income source, regional training, and other regional/shared services. The Subcommittee may wish to explore ways to implement and expand program efficiencies and policy changes that have been raised in previous workgroup reports, previously considered policy changes, and federally approved local pilot projects. In addition to possibly increasing child support compliance rates and customer satisfaction, some of these changes also could provide workload relief, which would help LCSAs manage current funding reductions.

Questions.

1. How has the funding reduction implemented in the 2020 budget impacted LCSAs?

2. As mentioned above, previous budgets included language asking the Administration to identify operational efficiencies and to conduct stakeholder workgroups to discuss additional strategies that might improve customer service and cost efficiency of the child support program. As the ongoing funding methodology has yet to be implemented, what are some ways those identified efficiencies could be incorporated or considered in the ongoing funding methodology? Has the department implemented any of the previously identified efficiencies, such as the consolidation of casework by income source or regional/shared services? If not, why?

Issue 4: TBL – Local Child Support Agency (LCSA) E-Signature

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes trailer bill language allowing LCSAs to substitute "wet" signatures with electronic signatures on forms and to paper file forms with electronic signatures. The language also requires LCSAs to maintain electronic forms of documents with electronic signatures until the final disposition of the case and to make those documents available for review at the request of the court or any party of the action or proceeding.

The electronic signature solution can be expanded statewide at no additional cost if paper filing of electronic signatures is permanently authorized statewide.

Background. Current law and California Rules of Court promote the use of electronic signatures in the context of filing legal documents. Generally, however, only electronically filed documents may be signed electronically. For documents requiring signatures under penalty of perjury or signed by opposing parties such as a stipulation, an electronic signature may replace a "wet signature" only if the document is electronically filed. Only LCSAs whose courts have the ability to receive electronic filing may obtain the electronic signatures of case participants on documents.

Use of electronic signatures on documents requiring signatures from case participants has significantly improved completion times in general. Stipulations signed electronically by case participants have proven to be a key to efficiently modifying support during the COVID-19 pandemic. DCSS currently supports electronic filing within 20 California counties through its DocuSign solution. As many as 25 counties have documented abilities to electronically file legal documents via their court's public website and/or have standing emergency orders issued by their courts allowing the LCSA to paper file legal documents, such as stipulations, containing electronic signatures of parties, during the duration of the COVID emergency. Another 33 counties are still paper filing documents and do not have the ability to electronically file or use electronic signature technology. The proposed language would allow a statewide option to electronically file. An LCSA without the current ability to electronically file documents with their court would be able to utilize electronic delivery and electronic signature tools via the state's electronic signature tool account and to paper file the electronically signed legal pleadings with their local court.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposed language.

Issue 5: TBL – Suspension of Performance Incentives

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes trailer bill language suspending the performance incentive program for LCSAs until 2022-23.

Background. Family Code allocates additional funding to provide performance incentives to the top ten performing LCSAs. Currently, the funding level is set at five percent of the state's share of collections from the respective counties. These incentives have been suspended since 2002-03.

Allowing the suspension of FC 17706 to expire would result in a 100% SGF liability. Based on Federal Fiscal year performance and collection data, the estimated impact would be approximately $430,000. DCSS and the LCSAs have worked collaboratively to develop a new local administration funding model aimed at providing equitable resources to the LCSAs. The 2019-20 LCSA funding proposal included a new incentive model that gave DCSS more flexibility to disseminate incentive funding to the counties. However, funding for the department and local LCSAs was reduced in the 2020 budget. DCSS recommends continuing the suspension for two additional state fiscal years while the funding and incentive model is reevaluated.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposed language.

PROPOSALS FOR INVESTMENT RELATING TO CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

The Subcommittee has received the following proposal for investment related to the DCSS. Note that proposal sponsors provided all information below, aside from staff comments and recommendations.

1. Adequate Funding of Local Child Support

Budget Issue. The Child Support Directors Association $19.2 million General Fund ongoing (matched with $37.3 million federal funds) to support local child support agencies.

Background. Between 2002 and 2018, funding for the child support program was held flat, forcing LCSAs to absorb operating cost increases within existing budgets. Exacerbating this problem was the absence of an allocation methodology, which resulted in significant funding variation between counties. That left many of the poorest counties with the lowest funding levels. Funding was increased by $56.5 million in 2019-2020, which was the first year of a proposed three-year series of funding increases. However, the 2020 budget reverted funding levels for LCSAs to 2018 levels, as a result of funding reductions made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cumulative effect of long-term severe underfunding, particularly in California's poorest counties, has negatively impacted LCSA's abilities to effectively implement the program and to meet the needs of children and families, particularly those families that are living in poverty and are most in need of services from the child support program.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Note that increasing funds for LCSAs will also result in increased federal funds of $37.3 million, for a total increase of $56.5 million. The proposed funding would restore that reduction. The Governor's budget includes a smaller augmentation of $25 million ($8.5 million General Fund) for LCSAs.

5180 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) – OFFICE OF EQUITY PROGRAMS

The Office of Equity was established in 2019 and reflects CDSS' commitment to serve all Californians. As a department providing food, shelter, safety and security, employment and job supports and training, CDSS is uniquely well-positioned to reduce structural inequities through its programs and practices.

CDSS has identified the following goals and strategies to advance equity:

- Foster a culture of diversity and inclusion that actively invites the contribution and participation of all people and is representative of the varied identities and differences (race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, caste, socio-economic status, thinking, and communication styles), in California

- Use data to make inequities visible

- Advance equity through training, tools, and technical assistance

- Improve language access and access for communities with disabilities

- Support on-going partnerships with those communities most affected by inequities to advance equitable policy and systems changes

Issue 1: COVID-19 Direct Response Expenditures (Rapid Response Program)

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes $5 million for the department's Rapid Response Unit to support entities that provide critical assistance and services to immigrants during emergencies when federal funding is not available.

Background. The Rapid Response Program was created to provide critical humanitarian assistance that is often unavailable for some immigrants and their families during emergent situations. The program provides temporary assistance, such as shelter, food, and emergency medical care, through qualified and culturally competent entities.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposal.

2. Please provide detail on some of the activities that the program has carried out in response to the COVID pandemic.

3. Does the department anticipate a need for new funding with the discussion of federal changes to immigration policy?

Issue 2: BCPs - Increased Staffing Resources for Various Programs within the Office of Equity

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes the following proposals to provide additional support for various programs within the Office of Equity.

- $920,000 ($797,000 General Fund) for one SSM I and three AGPAs to comply with language access requirements through the implementation of a department-wide language access policy.

- $320,000 ($139,000 General Fund) for two AGPA positions to address increased workload in the department's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office.

- $450,000 ($281,000 General Fund) for three AGPA positions to address the workload related to integrating tribal consideration throughout the department.

- $316,000 General Fund for the next three years to fund two limited-term AGPA positions to meet immigrants' needs given the ongoing emergent situations.

Language Access Resources. The translation of CDSS program documents is a vital federal and state-mandated service that provides Californians with limited English proficiency have access to the programs and services administered by the department. Since 2015-16, the number of analysts within the Language Services Unit has been decreasing while the workload has been increasing. For the past three years, six analysts have been performing the job formerly performed by ten full-time analysts, greatly impacting the completion time and quality of translations. Nearly 30 percent of participants in CDSS' programs identify a language other than English as their primary language. CDSS must provide all people meaningful access to social services and this is only possible when all individuals can understand the vital documents that affect and explain their rights and responsibilities. The addition of the requested staff is projected to result in a 50 percent increase in the translations completed in the first year.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office. The EEO Office provides agency wide leadership in advising management in the development, implementation, and maintenance of discrimination-free policies, procedures and practices, and ensures a work environment free from discrimination for all applicants and employees. CDSS is responsible for conducting investigations filed by members of the public receiving services from the department. The EEO Office responds to requests for information from the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the State Personnel Board when discrimination complaints are filed. CDSS is also responsible for conducting whistleblower complaint investigations. CDSS requires additional staff to complete the investigations within 180 days. Over the past seven years, CDSS has steadily seen an increase in EEO complaints (average increase of 20.6 percent). The number of complaints rose from 36 cases in 2014 to 128 cases in 2019. CDSS has taken steps to mitigate the rising workload by offering a mediation program instead of investigations when appropriate and agreeable to all parties involved. In addition, CDSS contracted with a vendor to provide automated transcription services to free up staff time from taking notes and then transcribing them. However, additional resources are still needed to meet the goal of completing investigations within 180 days.

Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA). The OTA was established in 2017 to fulfill legal and regulatory mandates involving compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and engagement with the Indian tribes in California. CDSS' engagement with the ICWA and tribal issues is based on legal requirements that mandate application of specialized laws whenever Indian children are involved in child custody proceedings. Currently, issues are identified and brought forth to CDSS by counties, tribes, and stakeholders. These issues are logged and tracked and then disseminated to the proper CDSS policy shops for response, which assists CDSS to meet its legal and regulatory obligations to tribes, counties, or other stakeholders. The tasks of tracking tribal issues as they span throughout the department presents difficulties that challenge compliance. The requested resources will allow CDSS to more closely monitor regulatory developments and initiatives that affect tribes and Indians in California in a way that includes them to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. The requested AGPAs will provide oversight in the coordination and facilitation of regional roundtables (three per region) comprised of county and tribal social services personnel, county counsels, and judges. This includes the establishment of workgroups and taskforces to address tribal concerns as identified through tribal communication.

Rapid Response Unit within the Immigration Services Bureau. The Rapid Response Unit was created in 2019 to develop and implement disaster assistance efforts primarily for undocumented immigrants. This unit is responsible for responding to emergency situations, where federal assistance is unavailable. The services provided are designed to meet urgent short-term needs and include shelter, food, and medical assistance. Since program implementation in 2015, CDSS has experienced significant program growth through an expansion of funding and scope of services provided. In 2020-21, two new programs, the Immigrant Legal Fellowship and ongoing DACA legal services, will require development and implementation. The requested positions will provide oversight as well as technical assistance, reporting, and site visits.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposals for additional staffing resources within the Office of Equity.

2. Please describe the progress made in the Immigrant Legal Fellowship program and the impact the department anticipates it will have over the next five years.

Issue 3: TBL – Flexibility in Allocation of Refugee Support Services Funds

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes trailer bill language to provide DSS with the authority and discretion to allocate declined or returned Refugee Support Services (RSS) funding and supplemental or targeted funding from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to other service areas (i.e., refugee-impacted counties or qualified nonprofit organizations).

Background. Per Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 13276, California allocates appropriated federal funds for refugee social services programs to each eligible county and, if the department chooses, to a qualified nonprofit organization, based on the number of refugees receiving aid in the eligible county or the number of refugees that reside in the eligible county. If a county declines or returns funding, DSS does not have the authority to use this funding for other counties with identified needs. WIC Section 13276 requires CDSS to distribute all RSS funding, including the annual appropriation from ORR and any declined or returned funds proportionally to all eight refugee-impacted counties. There are no applicable waivers or other authority that would allow deviation from the statute's proportional distribution system. WIC Section 13276 also requires that supplemental funding from ORR (i.e., funding provided in addition to the annual appropriation) and funding from ORR designated for services for a specific population of ORR-eligible individuals (e.g., older refugees) be distributed proportionally among all eligible counties.

The proposed change in language will allow DSS to reallocate declined or returned funding to better respond to the needs of eligible refugee populations.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposed language and discuss why the department is seeking additional flexibility in this program.

2. How often is it that counties return or decline RSS or ORR funding? What are some of the reasons a county would decline funding?

5180 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS) – CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Issue 4: Child Welfare Pandemic Response Proposals

Governor's Proposal. The table below, provided by the Legislative Analyst's Office, details the proposals in the Governor's budget relating to COVID-19 response within child welfare.

Figure 4

State Funds for Pandemic Response Within Child Welfare Programs

(In Thousands)

	2019-20[a]	2020-21[b]	2021-22[c]
Cash cards for families at risk of foster care	$27,842	$28,000	—
Family Resource Centers funding	3,468	7,000	$6,000
State contracts for technology (laptops and cell phones) and hotlines for foster youth and families[d]	—	2,042	1,750
Administrative workload for child welfare social workers (overtime and pandemic outreach)	5,000	—	—
Rate flexibilities for resource families directly impacted by pandemic	3,005	9,136[e]	3,458
Flexibilities and expansions for NMDs/former NMDs who turn 21 or lose otherwise lose eligibility for EFC due to pandemic	1,846	37,133	49,487
Pre-approval funding for emergency caregivers beyond 365 days	1,312	1,234	—
Totals	**$42,473**	**$84,545**	**$60,695**

[a] For 2019-20, funds were provided April through June 2020. Activities were approved by the Legislature through the Section 36.00 letter process.

[b] For 2020-21, pandemic-response activities are proposed by the administration for January through June 2021 for all actions other than flexibilities and expansions for NMDs. The Legislature has not yet approved these activities for 2020-21, with the exception of flexibilities and expansions for NMDs, which were included in the *2020-21 Budget Act* and are in place July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

[c] For 2021-22, funds are proposed by the administration for July through December 2021.

[d] Funding for state contracts for technology and hotlines in 2019-20 is included in the amount for Family Resource Centers funding.

[e] Includes $5.678 million funding from DREOA.

Note: Where applicable, amounts include assistance plus administration costs.

NMD = non-minor dependents; EFC = extended foster care; and DREOA = Disaster Response Emergency Operations Account.

Note that 2019-20 funding ended June 30, 2020. For all 2020-21 actions, other than flexibilities and expansions for nonminor dependents (NMDs), funding amounts listed in the figure reflect new proposals from the Administration as part of the 2020-21 revised budget at the time of the 2021-22 Governor's budget proposal. The Administration has indicated the proposed activities would begin in January 2021.

Background. On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency and President Trump declared a national emergency on March 13, 2020. The funding granted from the emergency declarations for CDSS programs is to provide for the mass care, food, shelter, and essential services necessary to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable Californians in this time of crisis. The department continues to provide funding through the regular Budget Act process, the federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), and the Disaster Response-Emergency Operations Account. Due to the timing of the recent Congressional action and Presidential approval, the DSS budget will need to be adjusted to reflect the additional federal support coming to California and its impact on the department's programs.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

As mentioned above, funding for the 2019-20 proposals ended on June 30, 2020, and the Administration has indicated that proposed activities in the 2020-21 revised budget would begin in January 2021. Staff notes that there appears to be a funding gap between July 2020 and January 2021. It is unclear whether activities have continued during that interim period and if authority is needed for counties to continue (or re-launch) these supports in 2020-21. The Subcommittee may want to inquire about the status of these activities and their funding mechanisms between July 2020 and January 2021.

Questions.

1. Please provide a brief overview of the proposals in the Governor's budget relating to pandemic response in child welfare.

2. For pandemic response proposals where funding ended in 2020 – have counties continued implementing these proposals? If so, have counties been using county funds to do this?

3. What is the funding mechanism for newly proposed pandemic response activities in the current year (set to begin January 2021)?

Issue 5: BCPs – Increased Staffing Resources for Various Programs within the Child and Family Services Division

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes the following proposals to provide additional support for various programs within the Child and Family Services Division.

- $499,000 ($281,000 General Fund) for two Associate Governmental Program Analysts (AGPAs) and one Staff Services Manager I (SSM I) to support California Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) quality assurance.

- $9.8 million ($6.7 million General Fund) for a total of 56 positions to manage increasing responsibilities, ensure state and federal compliance, and continue implementation and alignment between the Continuum of Care Reform and the federal Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

- $949,000 ($765,000 General Fund) for permanent positions to support the increasing workload of the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson. The proposal would make six limited-term positions permanent. The positions include one Staff Services Manager II, one SSM I, and four AGPAs.

- $767,000 ($441,000 General Fund) for permanent positions to provide oversight and monitor data required for child welfare reporting purposes. The positions include one SSM I and four AGPAs.

CFSR Background. The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducts Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) approximately every four years. The federal review requirement states that the child welfare agencies must ensure that they are operating in the jurisdictions where the services are provided, have standards to evaluate the quality of services, identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provide relevant reports, and evaluate implemented program improvement measures. Resources are needed to help the state pass this requirement for the next CFSR.

The three requested positions will be responsible for the research, development, and execution of a new training curriculum, and provide on-site technical assistance to all 58 counties. The staff will be responsible for creating, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and revising a training curriculum that will support the analytic and evaluative responsibilities required for completion of County Self Assessments and System Improvement Plans as part of the CFSR process.

Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and FFPSA Implementation. Assembly Bill 403 (Stone), Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015, codified the CCR framework for state and local governments to implement child-and-family centered reforms and to develop a continuum of integrated child-welfare and behavioral health supports designed to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare system. The FFPSA mandated significant changes related to court hearings and congregate care. These changes to the licensing requirements and program standards increase oversight requirements and requires access to new services that are trauma informed. DSS must develop a policy and outcome framework that aligns the CCR implementation and other statewide work with FFPSA requirements. Several active steps are in process to bring individual elements of

California's system into compliance with the FFPSA Part IV requirements. DSS conducts county audits and reviews to meet its obligations for oversight of child welfare programs and to ensure the protection of children and families. FFPSA will increase and add new workload to the existing monitoring and oversight process. The FFPSA transition workload will put a strain on the state's ability to continue to provide the same level of technical assistance to counties, including the development of corrective action plans. The CCR project teams are in the best position to continue this progress while concurrently transitioning to implement the FFPSA requirements. Note that the FFPSA will be discussed in more detail in the next agenda item.

Office of Foster Care Ombudsperson. The Office of Foster Care Ombudsperson (OFCO) was created by statute in 1998 as an autonomous entity within CDSS to protect the interests of children in foster care by providing them a means to make complaints and resolve issues related to their care, placement, services, and rights. The OFCO conducts impartial investigations and provides a systemic accountability mechanism by recommending system-wide policy recommendations to the Legislature, Governor's Office, and Child Welfare organizations across California.

Additional legislative mandates have increased responsibilities and the number and type of calls made to the OFCO. AB 175 (Gipson), Chapter 416, Statutes of 2019, expanded the Foster Youth Bill of Rights and required oversight duties of the office, including providing training and technical assistance on the rights of children and youth in foster care. AB 2247 (Gipson), Chapter 674, Statutes of 2018, expanded the role of the OFCO to investigate, resolve, and provide formal recommendations to county directors regarding placement stability complaints. The impact and resources needed to address the workload are higher than originally anticipated. Between 2018-19 and 2019-20, the OFCO had a 422 percent increase in complaints regarding foster youth placement instability. In 2019-20, CDSS received limited--term funding to address the increased workload resulting from the legislative mandates to the foster care system. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, calls to the office increased by 31 percent and monthly cases increased by 64 percent. This proposal seeks to align the continuing workload that CDSS has incurred due to these legislative mandates with the need for ongoing authority.

Data Monitoring for Child Welfare Reporting Purposes. CDSS has a fiduciary responsibility to the federal government to ensure that government-funded programs use federal funding for their intended purpose and per all federal regulations. Beginning in 2020-21, CDSS will conduct biennial county monitoring reviews to ensure compliance with the federal Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) data quality oversight requirements. CCWIS compliance ensures continued enhanced federal financial participation for the maintenance and operation of the current Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS), as well as the development and implementation of its replacement, the California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES). Increasing workload demands have caused a reduction and delay in completion for the data quality county review tasks. Current CDSS staff perform on-site county reviews and review all CDSS programs for various aspects of administration, such as fiscal integrity, program model fidelity, and program outcomes; even with this already heavy workload, there is no dedicated staff for monitoring data quality.

The proposed resources are critical to responding to current and new child welfare services requirements. The CWS/CMS receives millions of data entries per year, requiring dedicated resources to review the data collection, reporting, and storage. These issues need to be assessed promptly to support the achievement of safety, well-being, and permanency for children. Incomplete or inaccurate data can compromise the safety and wellbeing of at-risk children and can expose them to increased risk of abuse, exploitation, and maltreatment. The requested resources will improve program outcomes by managing local data quality more consistently and effectively.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the proposals for increased staffing resources within the Child and Family Services Division.

2. In December 2020, the department notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee of its unanticipated need for additional funding due to the decertification of out-of-state facilities and the need to quickly relocate returning foster youth from out-of-state care. How will the requested positions help in serving and monitoring those returning youth? What are the department's plans to ensure these youth are cared for in the future?

3. Please discuss the role of the Foster Care Ombudsperson. Has the Ombudsperson's involvement in placement stability issues resulted in better use of best practices or a reduction in placement instability?

Issue 6: FFPSA Implementation

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes $42.7 million General Fund for the implementation of the federal FFPSA, which reflects an October 2021 implementation date. The budget also includes trailer bill language for this purpose. However, language was not available at the time of the writing of this agenda.

Background. The FFPSA was enacted in 2018. A major change implemented by Part I of the legislation was a change in the way that Title IV-E funds could be spent by states. Before the FFPSA, IV-E funds could only be used to help with the costs of foster care for eligible children, administrative expenses to manage the program, training for staff and foster parents, adoption assistance, and kinship guardian assistance. With passage of the FFPSA, states now have the option to use these funds for prevention services that would allow "candidates for foster care" to stay with their parents or relatives. States must submit a prevention plan and use evidence-based services to take advantage of this option and be eligible to receive federal matching funds for prevention services. Note that the budget does not include funding to implement Part I of the FFPSA. The DSS has indicated that the state will implement Part I at a later time.

The budget provides funding for the implementation of Part IV of the FFPSA. Part IV of the FFPSA puts in place new requirements surrounding congregate care placements. Generally, Part IV aligns with the state's commitment to reduce reliance on congregate care, embodied in the state's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). CCR is a large-scale overhaul of the foster care system set into motion in 2015, with the release of the department's report entitled "California's Child Welfare Continuum of Care Reform." The report listed recommendations to improve assessment of children and families to make more appropriate initial placement decisions; emphasize home-based family care; support placement with available services; change the goals for group home care placement; and, increase transparency for child outcomes.

Some changes are needed to further align CCR with the FFPSA. One major component of CCR was the creation of Short-Term Residential Treatment Placements (STRTPs), which are intended to replace group homes and provide short-term, therapeutic services to stabilize children so that they may quickly return to a home-based family care setting. The FFPSA now requires California's STRTPs to provide 24/7 access to nursing consistent with their treatment model, a minimum of six months of aftercare services when a youth exits an STRTP placement to a family-based setting, and have all placements assessed by a qualified individual. Consequently, there will be additional county staff time and training required to develop these changes and meet the new requirements. The CDSS is collaborating with the Department of Health Care Services to ensure joint implementation of the new federal requirements and integration of services across programs. Other requirements of the FFPSA include the provision of at least six months of specified support services for youth and families after a youth exits congregate care, enhanced assessment and reporting around congregate care, additional training of court staff, judges, social workers, providers, and other individuals involved in the assessment process.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

As mentioned above, Part I of the FFPSA provides federal matching funds to help states prevent entries into the foster care system. More specifically, it provides a $1 match for $1 spent by states on certain prevention services. Currently, local family maintenance and family preservation programs provide voluntary and/or court-ordered prevention services but there is very little federal funding available for this purpose, aside from the FFPSA. The Subcommittee may wish to inquire as to why the department has chosen to delay implementation of Part I and the leveraging of additional federal funds.

As mentioned above, elements of CCR must be modified for the state to comply with the FFPSA. The FFPSA requires a qualified individual (QI), who is medically certified, to assess and report on the appropriateness of all STRTP placements. The administration's plan includes funding for QIs to participate in Child and Family Teams (CFTs), conduct the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment, and prepare required court documentation for all STRTP placements. However, there are certain elements of CCR that have yet to be fully implemented, such as the CFT. CFTs provide input to help determine the most appropriate placement for youth based on the youth's behavioral and mental health needs and other criteria.

Generally, the department, along with other partners, provides an update to legislative staff on CCR quarterly. However, due to the COVID public health emergency, the most recent update was canceled and has not been rescheduled. The Subcommittee may want to inquire about the status of CCR and the remaining elements to be implemented. This update will also help the Subcommittee and staff better understand the intersection between CCR and the FFPSA. The Subcommittee should be updated on how CCR is being implemented to better understand the intersection between CCR and FFPSA.

Questions.

1. Does the department have a plan in place to implement the optional Part I section of the FFPSA in the future?

2. Please detail the current department administered family maintenance and preservation programs, if any.

3. How will the transition to FFPSA enable California to ensure a more complete continuum of services for at risk youth?

Issue 7: TBL – Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Eligibility

Governor's Proposal. The Governor's budget includes trailer bill language that would allow children and nonminor dependents to participate in the Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Funding Program if placed out of state. With 308 children per year residing outside of CA, the General Fund impact per year is $1.87 million.

Background. The ARC Funding Program was designed to provide payments to caregivers of children and nonminor dependents, who are not eligible for federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) payments. ARC payments are comprised of the applicable CalWORKs payment and supplemental general funds to bring the payment amount up to what the child or youth would receive were they covered by AFDC-FC funding. Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11461.3 established the ARC Funding Program and outlined the eligibility requirements for a child or nonminor dependent to receive payments. The current language excludes children and nonminor dependents who are placed with a relative outside of California, creating an inequity for these youth and their caregivers.

Currently, county practice ranges from recommending that this group of relative caregivers apply for CalWorks, paid for with county-only funding, to some instances in which no payment is made. Relatives of a child or nonminor dependent may live in another state, yet maintain a relationship with the youth. Changing this language will allow youth the option to live with these relatives, while upholding the efforts to foster family connections. As of September 2020, there are only 308 of these types of placements.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

Questions.

1. Please provide a brief overview of the proposed language.

PROPOSALS FOR INVESTMENT RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The Subcommittee has received the following proposals for investment related to the child welfare programs within the DSS. Note that proposal sponsors provided all information below, aside from staff comments and recommendations. Staff recommends all proposals be held open.

1. Increase Funding for the Emergency Child Care Bridge for Foster Children

Budget Issue. Children Now, the Child Care Resource Center, the Alliance for Children's Rights, the California Alternative Payment Program Association, the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles, Child Care Providers United, the County Welfare Directors Association, and the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work requests an additional $37 million General Fund ongoing for the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program. This will add to the $41 million already allocated for the program, bringing total funding to $78 million.

Background. The Emergency Child Care Bridge for Foster Children Program has been a huge success in addressing the timing gap for foster children to access child care. When children are removed from their homes, they are in crisis and prospective resource parents - often relatives - instantly need access to child care in order to care for their new family member and keep their jobs. Yet, state-subsidized child care programs typically operate at full capacity, with short enrollment windows that rarely align with a child's placement into foster care. This makes it nearly impossible for caregivers who work to take in young children. The Emergency Child Care Bridge was designed to address this "timing gap" so that children can be promptly placed and stabilized with loving relatives or with the right resource family. The program can help to alleviate some of the extra strain that COVID-19 has placed not only on resource families, but also on both the child welfare and child care systems. The requested funding would make the voucher available for roughly half the children in foster care between the ages of 0 to 12 (18,743 based on July 1, 2019 data).

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

2. Improve Permanency Outcomes for Foster Youth: Reinvest in Foster Family Agency (FFA) Social Workers

Budget Issue. The California Alliance of Child and Family Services and the National Association of Social Workers, California chapter request $5.4 million General Fund ongoing to help stabilize the FFA social worker workforce.

Background. Multiple research studies show that the loss of a social worker significantly disrupts the permanency process and severs another bond creating a loss of trust and re-traumatization for the children and youth. National studies have proven that with each loss of a social worker, the rate of achieving permanency drops dramatically from 74.5% with one social worker to less than a 2% success rate of achieving permanency with three or more social workers. Child welfare social workers employed by FFAs experience a 59% turnover rate over a period of two years. The primary reason for the high turnover rate is the inability to pay competitive salaries due to the low pay rate for FFA social workers. The General Fund request of $5.4 million and $1.5 million in federal matching funds will help offset the inadequate funding of the FFA rate. The current FFA rate was created in 2016 to be an "interim" placeholder with the plan to evaluate and create permanent rates by December 31, 2017. Unfortunately, that work has been postponed four times and will be postponed again this year. Providing additional supports to social workers will help children and youth develop strong and healthy relationships, even in challenging times, and will increase reunification, guardianship and adoption.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

3. Child Welfare Caregiver Stipend

Budget Issue. The Alliance for Children's Rights and Children Now request $73.2 million General Fund one-time to provide a $100 a month stipend for children placed in a resource family with an approved relative caregiver and all K-12 foster students.

Background. COVID-19 is having outsized impact on communities of color with low income Americans enduring more job losses, more difficulty getting food and medicine, and higher levels of debt. Resource parents are taking on ever more challenging and complex roles as they support the children in their care with distance learning, accessing behavioral and other supports virtually, and managing remote visits with social workers, other support services professionals, and family. This funding would be provided to all children placed in a resource family, with an approved relative, in an emergency placement, or in any other family home. This focus on supporting children in their placements will address the significant real-time impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on children and youth in foster care including the significant increase in time spent managing family visitation, social worker visits, medical and mental health visits and services and distance learning.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

4. Cash Assistance for CalWORKs Families with Children in Foster Care

Budget Issue. The County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) requests $9 million General Fund ongoing to provide CalWORKs families whose children have been placed into foster care to receive monthly cash assistance for a period of up to 180 days while active reunification efforts are ongoing. The request also includes $500,000 for automation costs in 2022-23.

Background. Currently, CalWORKs families whose children have been removed from the home and placed in foster care cease to be eligible for CalWORKs monthly cash assistance payments. Removing cash assistance from a family that is already below the poverty line worsens housing insecurity for the family and makes reunification harder to achieve. While the child welfare agency cannot remove a child from a family due solely to homelessness, a judge cannot reunify a child to an unsheltered parent. Any parent whose eligible child or children have been removed from the home and placed into foster care while their CalWORKs case is open may be entitled to receive CalWORKs services if the county determines the services are necessary for family reunification and the parent has a family reunification plan. However, those parents are not eligible to continue to receive cash grants along with the services while reunification services are being provided. By maintaining monthly cash assistance to CalWORKs families while their children have been temporarily removed from the home, this proposal would provide greater financial stability to families seeking to reunify with their children, thereby improving outcomes for reunification.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open. Note that in the 2019-20 legislative session this proposal was put forth as a policy bill (SB 1341 (Hurtado)). However the bill was vetoed by the Governor with the direction to address the issue during the annual budget process.

5. Child Welfare Services: Prevention Services

Budget Issue. CWDA requests $50 million in 2021-22 and $100 million General Fund ongoing, matched with an equal amount of federal funds, to support counties in building services and supports to avoid foster care entries and prevent child maltreatment.

Background. Historic legislation passed by Congress provides California the opportunity to invest in vulnerable families to prevent foster care entries, and to use this new structure as a jumping-off point for investments to address the disparities shown in systemic data over time. The Federal Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018 provides $1 match to every $1 invested for certain evidence-based prevention services. In order to capitalize on this new funding opportunity and help families, initial and ongoing state investment is needed to build service capacity and infrastructure. The proposal includes $45 million in 2021-22 and $95 million ongoing for local, community-driven programming, $4 million ongoing for state infrastructure, and $1 million ongoing for training.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open. Note that a policy bill (AB 3272 (Reyes)) related to FFPSA implementation was put forth in the 2019-20 legislative session but was not acted upon by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

6. Supporting Vulnerable Minors in Extraordinary Times

Budget Issue. The Alliance for Children's Rights and the California Coalition for Youth requests $1.5 million General Fund in 2021-22 and $2.2 million in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to support minors unable to access foster care due to court closures or delays as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This request also includes trailer bill language to enact this change.

Background. Older youth often face barriers in accessing foster care as they may be determined to be less at risk than younger children. Sufficient data to back this statement has been difficult to prove, as evidenced by a 2019 report from the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) entitled Older Youth Access to Foster Care. The report finds that maltreatment substantiation rates for older youth have consistently been below younger youth; yet, it was difficult for the LAO to make more definitive conclusions due to the lack of available data. Timely entry is critical for older youth in need of support who are removed from their homes due to allegations of abuse or neglect, who often require immediate assistance with housing, transportation, and food, and are at high risk for homelessness and aging out of eligibility for services. The added stressors of the public health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are creating additional pressures for youth, who are at more of a risk for reduction in hours or job losses as a result of the Stay at Home orders.

The proposal would allow a narrow exception for those older minors so that they have access to the supports and services of extended foster care when the youth has been removed from their home and the court finds that it is in their best interest to enter extended foster care. The provisions in the proposed trailer bill will sunset on January 1, 2023.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open. Note that there is a policy bill authored by Assemblymember Gipson in the current 2021-22 legislative session associated with this request.

7. Ensuring that STRTPs Achieve Stability Through One-Time COVID-19 Relief

Budget Issue. The California Alliance of Child and Family Services requests $30 million General Fund in 2021-22 and $12 million in 2022-23 to provide a one-time budget allocation to stabilize STRTPs.

Background. Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) are an integral component of the CCR continuum, providing a critical therapeutic intervention for foster youth needing a high level of care that addresses their trauma and mental/behavioral health needs in a temporary residential setting, with the goal of stabilizing them and enabling them to transition to home-based care and permanency. STRTPs have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as organizations struggle to maintain the health and safety of the youth in their care and the staff who are committed to supporting them. The added expenses they have absorbed are posing a significant threat to their operations. STRTPs have incurred additional costs relating to unreimbursed staffing, dedicating facilities for isolation and quarantine, the purchase of personal protective equipment, and the loss of revenue due to holds placed on admissions to maintain health and safety.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

8. Funding for the Parents Anonymous Statewide Helpline and Parent, Children, and Youth Groups

Budget Issue. Parent's Anonymous requests $3 million per year over the next three fiscal years to support the Parents Anonymous Helpline.

Background. Data from the Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline indicates a huge increase in the number of calls and texts during the COVID pandemic. Rather than reporting abuse, many of the callers are concerned parents seeking support and help with COVID-19 specific concerns. Families are experiencing stresses and pressures brought on by unemployment, concerns about evictions or foreclosures, loss of credit and their children falling behind in school. While the pandemic may ease in the near future due to the availability of vaccines, the impact of the pandemic will undoubtedly linger on for quite some time. Thus there is a need to continue the provisions of services currently being provided by Parents Anonymous.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open.

9. Preventing and Reduce Foster Youth Homelessness

Budget Issue. John Burton Advocates for Youth requests $18.2 million in 2021-22 and $22 million annually thereafter to help provide housing stability for current and former foster youth.

Background. Current and former foster youth experience homelessness and housing instability at greater rates than the general population. During the COVID-19 crisis, maintaining stability is increasingly more difficult for this population, who are disproportionately impacted by job loss and the looming housing crisis. Unlike the general population of young adults, foster youth do not have the emotional or economic support of an extended family. Hardships exacerbated by the pandemic include unemployment, homelessness, and long waiting lists for housing. The requested funding would be used to train child welfare workers and probation officers on the housing/homelessness response system, establish a THP-Plus Housing Supplement Program, and establish permanent Housing Navigator and Transitional Housing Programs.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open. Note that there is a policy bill (AB 413 (Ting)) pending in the current legislative session associated with this request.

10. Healthy Futures for Foster Youth – Extending the Infant Supplement

Budget Issue. John Burton Advocates for Youth, the Alliance for Children's Rights, Black Women for Wellness, the Children's Law Center of California, and the National Center for Youth Law request $729,000 ongoing to extend the infant supplement payment.

Background. Foster youth experience disproportionately high rates of pregnancy, face greater hurdles in preparing for birth than their non-foster peers, and incur greater costs due to poor birth outcomes. Youth navigating these challenges are disproportionately youth of color. California currently provides a supplemental payment to parenting foster youth to assist with the care and supervision of their child. This payment is known as the infant supplement and is provided upon the birth of their child. This proposal would start the infant supplement three months prior to the expected delivery date to ensure expectant foster youth are equipped to prepare for the birth of their child.

Staff Comment and Recommendation. Hold open. Note that there is a policy bill (AB 366 (Rubio)) pending in the current legislative session associated with this request.

11. Fully Fund the Resource Family Approval Workload in the CCR True-Up

Budget Issue. The County Welfare Directors Association requests $80million General Fund annually to fully fund costs associated with the resource family approval (RFA) workload.

Background. The state constitutional provisions of Proposition 30 require that the stat fund the net costs to each county of any new state child welfare requirements or programs enacted after 2011 and provides that counties only implement those new requirements to the extent state funding is provided. The CCR True-up is the county-by-county reconciliation of savings and costs resulting from CCR implementation. The current estimate of costs associated with the RFA workload is $80 million. Counties have been fronting these costs without reimbursement due to a disputed interpretation of the constitutional requirements of Proposition 30. The Administration believes the RFA process was in statute prior to 2011 realignment and, therefore, believes all costs associated with the statewide RFA process are a county responsibility. Although the RFA process was in statute prior to 2011, it was only a pilot project in five counties and no statewide mandate existed for RFA in statute prior to 2011. CWDA disagrees with this interpretation and requests the state provide funding.