



# County of Santa Cruz

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## HUMAN RESOURCES AGENCY

Cecilia Espinola, Administrator  
1000 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(83 1) 454-4130 or 454-4045 FAX: (83 1) 454-4642

December 1, 2000

AGENDA: December 12, 2000

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER CARE PROGRAM AND RELATED SERVICES

Dear Members of the Board:

As you know, the Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 16501 requires the Human Resources Agency (HRA) to provide emergency shelter care to children who are temporarily removed from their homes in order to protect them from abuse or neglect. Over the past year, it has been increasingly more difficult to identify emergency placements for children who are between the ages of 6-18 and children with special needs. As a result, we are now in the middle of an emergency care crisis. There has also been a significant increase in the need for intensive services that support social worker activities leading to suitable long-term placements. The purpose of this letter is to propose several immediate actions to your Board that will address the emergency foster care bed crisis and provide enhanced foster care services. The recommended actions include approval of a pilot program to insure that adequate emergency beds are available when children in our community need to be sheltered, and of the addition of staff to provide the services to place children in appropriate, stable homes.

#### **Background**

The County is reimbursed for the cost of providing emergency shelter for children through a combination of Federal and State Child Welfare Services funds. Foster parents receive payment for providing this emergency care based on rates established by your Board. The current monthly rates of \$416 for children under 12 and \$520 for children 12 and over were adopted in 1985. At that time, these rates were sufficient to encourage foster parents to keep bed space available for short-term emergency care. Today the Human Resources Agency is having difficulty in finding foster families who are willing to shelter children on an emergency basis. Considering the cost of living in Santa Cruz County, it is understandable that many foster parents are just not able to reserve beds specifically for emergency care with the current level of reimbursement. Consequently, there is now a critical shortage of emergency foster care beds for abused and neglected children in our community. The current lack of emergency foster care beds means that children often wait for hours while social workers search for an available emergency placement. The restricted number of choices for

emergency placements also means that children have a higher likelihood of moving between multiple placements.

### **Proposed Children's Emergency Shelter Care Program**

Based on research with other Counties and discussions with foster parents, HRA has developed a pilot program to offer a retainer fee to foster parents to reserve beds specifically for emergency foster care. This program is similar to programs offered in other adjacent counties and parallels programs to provide emergency beds for other crisis populations, such as mentally ill adults.

The proposed Children's Emergency Shelter Care Program will establish 12 emergency care beds located strategically throughout the County based upon historical need. Under the pilot program, participating foster parents will be reimbursed \$300 per month in exchange for each reserved emergency foster care bed. In addition, these foster parents will continue to receive the current emergency shelter care payment for each placement. Because many of the children needing emergency shelter are in crisis or have special needs, it is essential to provide additional support to these foster parents. HRA staff will provide monthly support groups with foster care specialists and ongoing specialized training. In return, the participating foster parents will agree to:

- accept placement of all children by Human Resources Agency social workers with priority given to children ages 6- 17;
- be available by County-provided pager at all times, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week unless respite time off is authorized; and
- commit to maintain the placement for 30 days unless the social worker is able to make an appropriate permanent placement before the end of the 30-day emergency stay.

This pilot program will insure that children are sheltered for enough time to allow social work staff to focus on finding the most appropriate long-term placement for the child. It is also critical during this time to provide the necessary services to both the family and child that support a smooth transition to either reunification in the family home or a longer term out of home placement. In order to provide these intensive services, HRA is requesting your Board's approval of the addition of three social work staff. Two social work support staff (2 FTE Social Worker I's) will assist case carrying social workers with the supervision of visits, transportation services and a variety of other tasks to implement family case plans and support placement stability. A foster care placement specialist (1 FTE Social Worker II) is requested to provide intensive assistance with out-of-home placements.

### **Program Costs and Funding**

For the period from January 1, 2001 through June 30, 2001, payments to foster care parents to reserve designated emergency shelter beds will be approximately \$22,000. HRA anticipates salary and benefit expenditures for the three additional staffpositions in the amount of \$77,782, and one time fixed asset expenditures of \$17,100 for IBM compatible personal computers and office equipment. The total cost of the Children's Emergency Program is thus anticipated to be \$116,882 for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**PROPOSED CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER CARE PROGRAM**

These expenditures will be fully funded by a combination of Federal Child Welfare and State Realignment funds and thus represent no new County cost. The Federal Child Welfare Services allocation will reimburse \$58,441 of the costs. In addition, unanticipated revenue due to caseload growth in realignment is available to cover the remaining \$58,441 of program costs. A resolution accepting and appropriating unanticipated revenue from these funding sources in the amount of \$116,882 is attached. The cost of the program in subsequent years will be funded by increased State participation. This will result in no new County costs for the Children's Emergency Shelter Program.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The proposed pilot Children's Emergency Shelter Program and the associated staff support will address the current crisis in emergency shelter and will provide much needed resources to strengthen our continuum of services for abused and neglected children. By accessing a combination of State and Federal funds, these critical program improvements can be achieved at no additional County cost. At this time, the Human Resources Agency requests your Board's approval of the actions necessary to implement this essential program and services.

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Approve the proposed Children's Emergency Shelter Program as described in this report;
2. Authorize the Human Resources Agency Administrator to prepare and execute appropriate contracts or agreements with foster care providers to reflect the retainer reimbursement provided for in Children's Emergency Shelter Program;
3. Adopt the attached resolution accepting and appropriating \$116,882 in unanticipated revenue (\$58,441 from Federal Child Welfare Services funds and \$58,441 from the State of California Realignment Fund);
4. Approve the addition of 3.0 FTE positions in the Human Resources Agency, and direct County Personnel to expedite classification and hiring ;
5. Approve the purchase of fixed assets in the amount of \$17,100, and direct General Services to expedite the purchasing of the assets; and
6. Direct the Human Resources Agency Administrator to report to your Board on the Children's Emergency Shelter Care Program as a part of scheduled budget hearings.

Very truly yours,



CECILIA ESPINOLA  
Administrator

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Agenda: December 12, 2000**  
**PROPOSED CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY SHELTER CARE PROGRAM**

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Attachment

CE\SG\jr

RECOMMENDED:



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SUSANA MAURIELLO  
County Administrative Officer

CC: County Administrative Office  
Auditor Controller  
County Personnel  
HRA-Fiscal  
General Services

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

On the motion of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
duly seconded by Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
the following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING UNANTICIPATED REVENUE

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Cruz is a recipient of funds from Department of Social Services for Child Welfare Services program; and

WHEREAS, the County is recipient of funds in the amount of \$ 116,882 which are either in excess of those anticipated or are not specifically set forth in the current fiscal year budget of the County; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Government Code Section 29130(c)/29064(b), such funds may be made available for specific appropriation by a four-fifths vote of the Board of Supervisors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Santa Cruz County Auditor-Controller accept funds in the amount of \$116,882 into

Department Human Resources Agency

<u>I/C</u>	<u>Index Number</u>	<u>Revenue Subject Number</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
011	392100	0924	Fed Child Welfare Services	58,441
011	392100	2462	State Realignment	58,441

and that such funds be and are hereby appropriated as follows:

<u>I/C</u>	<u>Index Number</u>	<u>Expenditure Subject Number</u>	<u>PRJ/UCD</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
011	392100	3100		Reg.	77,782
011	392100	8404		Other Equipment	17,100
011	392100	4080		Child Protection-Misc.	22,000

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DEPARTMENT HEAD I hereby certify that the fiscal provisions have been researched and that the Revenue(s) (has been) (will be) received within the current fiscal year.

By Francisco Garcia  
Department Head

Date 11/29/10

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

66  
 Recommended to Board

Not Recommended to Board

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ by the following vote (requires four-fifths vote for approval):

AYES: SUPERVISORS

NOES: SUPERVISORS

ABSENT: SUPERVISORS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of the Board.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM :

*[Signature]*  
County Counsel

APPROVED AS TO ACCOUNTING DETAIL:

# 392100  
*[Signature]* 12-4-00  
Auditor-Controller

Distribution:

- Auditor-Controller.
- County Council
- County Administrative Officer
- Originating Department

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