

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS  
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY

BOARD AGENDA # B-6

Urgent \_\_\_\_\_ Routine X

AGENDA DATE MAY 8, 2001

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES pk NO \_\_\_\_\_  
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT THE FAMILY TO FAMILY INITIATIVE AND EXPAND FUNDING FOR FAMILY DECISION MEETINGS AND FAMILY RESOURCE CONFERENCE PROGRAMS.

STAFF  
RECOMMEN-  
DATIONS:

1. APPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILY TO FAMILY INITIATIVE.
2. APPROVE USE OF CalWORKs WTW INCENTIVE FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$540,000 FOR WRAP-AROUND SERVICES AND NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT TO CWS/TANF FAMILIES INVOLVED IN FAMILY DECISION MEETINGS AND THE FAMILY TO FAMILY INITIATIVE.
3. RESERVE \$315,000 FOR THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS.

FISCAL  
IMPACT:

The total cost of the wrap-around services is \$540,000. Appropriations and corresponding revenues are included in the CSA's Fund 1631 Budget Unit, per the CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Incentives Program Budget approved in concept by the Board on January 23, 2001. Appropriations and corresponding revenues for the succeeding years will be included in the appropriate fiscal year CSA budget request to the Board.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2001-352

On motion of Supervisor Mayfield, Seconded by Supervisor Caruso  
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: Mayfield, Simon, Caruso, and Chair Paul

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: Blom

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1) X Approved as recommended

2) \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

3) \_\_\_\_\_ Approved as amended

Motion:

Christine Ferraro

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

By: Deputy

File No.

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**DISCUSSION:** In January 2001, the Board of Supervisors approved "in concept" the Welfare Incentive Expenditure Plan presented by the Community Services Agency (CSA). CSA was directed to return to the Board with specific information regarding each program recommendation. Following is one of several recommendations that will be returning to the Board for consideration.

**TITLE: FAMILY TO FAMILY INITIATIVE**

**DESCRIPTION:**

Family to Family is a best practice foster care model developed by the Casey Foundation in Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, Ohio. This model has produced an immense increase in community families who desire to become foster parents to children in their own neighborhood. Cuyahoga County increased their foster families by 100% through their Family to Family initiative. This model integrates well with the Family Decision Model that CSA Children's Services is currently utilizing and complements the philosophy of enabling children to remain connected to their family and neighborhood even if they must leave their parent's home.

Family to Family is a model of foster care services that emphasizes community support to families with children at risk of placement or whose children were recently placed. It also emphasizes support to foster children and the foster parents caring for them. Strategic elements of Family to Family include: (1) community participation and shared decision making in recommending changes to child welfare practices; (2) family-centered practice including team meetings with family, social worker, and multiple service providers, (3) modification of policies and procedures to support a culture change within child welfare to support the recommended changes, and (4) development of neighborhood networks of support and services which promote prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation will provide CSA with technical training and assistance in the implementation of the initiative. This initiative will be research based and outcome specific. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data will be used to identify the rates of child abuse and neglect within neighborhoods and help neighborhood partners understand the need for foster parent resources, prevention services, and support and treatment services within the neighborhood. Focus groups involving neighborhoods and community partners will be critical to developing strategies for implementation which take into account the strengths and needs of the neighborhood and our current child welfare system.

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DISCUSSION  
(Cont'd):

Request for Proposals (RFP's) will require community based service organizations to establish or expand neighborhood-based services that are networked with other local services and supports. These networks of support and wraparound services will act to prevent child abuse and neglect by reducing isolation of children and families and provide supportive services when foster care becomes necessary by providing a culturally sensitive supportive network easily accessible to the family. These services will be developed with the community and could include: foster parent recruiting, a drop-in center, advocacy services, information and referral services, substance abuse programs, parenting classes, and various support groups. The type of services will be dependent on the culture and needs of the neighborhood. These services could be contracted out with local neighborhood collaboratives that already exist in our community.

When child abuse and neglect allegations occur, the neighborhood-based social worker can utilize the neighborhoods network of services and support for family preservation. If it is determined that removal is necessary, kin or foster family resources will exist to maintain the child within their own school, church and neighborhood. As placement resources are developed within the neighborhood, diligent efforts will be made to remove barriers that often hamper a child's stay within their community. An example of this is square footage requirements for licensing foster homes. It is anticipated that through outreach, focus groups, and community education in Family to Family and child protection, neighborhoods will support targeted foster parent recruitment efforts and promote Family Decision Meetings. When parent and foster parent live in the same community, mentoring by the foster parent and frequent visitation between parent and child becomes easier.

Implementation of the Family to Family Initiative and the expansion of the Family Decision Meeting model in community-based settings will occur through the leadership of a Manager II. This Manager will work to ensure child welfare collaboratives are expanded and become true neighborhood-based partnerships for protecting children. Three additional Social Worker IV staff will be assigned to handle community-specific recruitment, training of foster parents in the philosophy of Family to Family, and to facilitate the development of community-based Family Decision Meeting programs.

**TARGET POPULATIONS:**

The target populations will be identified through the Geographical Information System (GIS). The GIS will identify neighborhoods where children are being removed.

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DISCUSSION  
(Cont'd):

**NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED:**

1. Lack of foster homes in areas where children are being removed
2. Lack of preventative services in neighborhoods where children are being removed.
3. Lack of treatment and supportive services in neighborhoods where children are being removed.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:**

1. # SERVED: Community Services Agency currently has 675 children in placement. The Family to Family initiative will identify the neighborhoods these children come from and target these neighborhoods.

2. OUTCOMES: Expected outcomes will be a) increased foster homes in

targeted neighborhoods, b) decrease in number of placement changes for children placed in foster care, c) increased reunification in targeted neighborhoods, and d) less need for removal in targeted neighborhoods as pre-placement services increase.

3. COST BENEFITS: Cost benefits will be seen through placement costs. Child welfare agencies already participating in the Family to Family Initiative have developed outcomes such as:

- a. A reduction in the number/proportion of children served in institutional care.
- b. A shift of resources from institutional care to family foster care and family-centered services across all child and family serving systems.
- c. A decrease in the lengths of stay in out-of-home placement.
- d. An increase in the number/proportion of planned reunifications.
- e. A decrease in the number/proportion of re-entries into care.
- f. A reduction in the number of placement moves experienced by children in care.
- g. An increase in the number of/proportion of siblings placed together.
- h. A reduction in the total number /rate of children served away from there families.

As Stanislaus County CSA launches the Family to Family initiative, similar outcomes will be developed. These types of outcomes will translate in savings. More pre-placement services in targeted neighborhoods will translate into fewer foster care placements. As CSA develops neighborhood foster home, CSA will decrease their placement with Foster Family Agencies, a much more expensive placement option. The more children are moved, the more likely they will require more restrictive, more expensive placement. More treatment and supportive services in targeted