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

DEPT: Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA # *A-5

Urgent

Routine

AGENDA DATE January 12, 2010

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Proclaim the Week of January 24, 2010 as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Proclaim the Week of January 24, 2010 as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week.
2. Request the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Present a Resolution to the President of the Local Chapter of the National Eligibility Workers Association at the Board Of Supervisors Meeting on January 26, 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2010-005

On motion of Supervisor Monteith, Seconded by Supervisor DeMartini
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Chiesa, Monteith, DeMartini, and Chairman Grover

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1) X Approved as recommended

2) _____ Denied

3) _____ Approved as amended

4) _____ Other:

MOTION:

Christine Ferraro

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

DISCUSSION:

Family Services Specialists play a vital role in administering programs within our community that provide a safety net for individuals and families who lack the basic necessities in life, such as shelter, food, clothing and health care.

Family Services Specialists provide assistance to over 27% of all individuals residing in our County. In Stanislaus County, over 143,000 residents, impacted by the economic decline, home foreclosures, and Stanislaus County's increased unemployment rate, rely on Family Services Specialists to accurately, efficiently and compassionately determine their eligibility to safety net programs, including Medi-Cal, Food Stamps, Foster Care, CalWORKs, Welfare to Work, Refugee Assistance, Child Care, and General Assistance.

Customers may access assistance at multiple locations throughout the County, including Modesto, Ceres, Hughson, Oakdale, Patterson and Turlock. In addition, Family Services Specialists assist customers throughout the year at designated health clinics and at community events. Community based locations and outreach events are essential to informing the community about services available to meet their basic needs. Providing services in the neighborhoods where customers reside link customers with economic stability, nutritional food, access to medical services and safe housing.

"C-4 Yourself" is a web-based application process that is administered through the Consortium IV (C-IV) automated system. In October 2007, Stanislaus County was one of four counties that began accepting Food Stamp applications through this Internet application. Over 10% of all Food Stamp applications are filed by customers on-line. In November 2009, the C-4 Yourself web site was expanded. Customers may now apply for Medi-Cal and CalWORKs. Customers who have applied for benefits via the Internet may also check the status of their benefits, and complete annual redeterminations.

The current economic decline has had a significant impact on individuals and families residing in our County. The unemployment rate has increased from 7.7% in September 2007 to 17.2% in November 2009. As a result, during that same time period, the number of individuals accessing services administered through the Agency has increased from 119,554 to over 143,000; applications for Cash Aid have increased by 16%; applications for Food Stamp benefits have increased by 75%; applications for Medi-Cal have increased by 40%.

In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, Family Services Specialists in the StanWORKs and Adult Services Division were responsible for the accurate issuance of over \$130,479,124 in Cash Aid and Food Stamp benefits. During the Fiscal Year 2008-2009, the amount of benefits issued grew to \$173,246,946, an increase of 33%. The economic value of these benefits in Stanislaus County exceeded \$307,000,000.

Although, this year has been exceptionally difficult due to the declining number of available jobs in our region, Family Services Specialists through the Welfare to Work program, assisted over 2,147 customers in attaining employment. The Welfare to Work program is designed to assist CalWORKs customers in increasing their employment skills. Services include job skill development, vocational training, and work experience.

Access to Child Care is an essential element in assisting customers in obtaining and securing employment. Family Services Specialists link parents with Child Care providers and issue payments. 1,400 families are enrolled and receive child care assistance on a monthly basis.

In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, \$8,929,018 in direct payments was issued to Child Care providers throughout the County.

Family Services Specialists partner with Social Workers and Probation Officers to issue accurate and timely payments for children in Foster Care placement. Direct payments to Foster Care providers throughout the County for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 totaled \$ 9,853,583.

General Assistance is administered by the Agency's Adult Services Division and is funded through County funds. Family Services Specialists provide guidance and professional advocacy services to assist customers with the Social Security Application process. In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, over \$389,646 was received in Interim Assistance repayments as a result of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) advocacy program.

Family Services Specialists in the Agency's Finance and Operations Division are recognized for their commitment to a high level of program integrity. The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) is responsible for the prevention, detection and investigation of welfare fraud. In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, SIU fraud investigations, overpayments and over issuances totaling \$1,818,231, or 1.1% of the total benefits issued, were identified by SIU.

Program integrity and accuracy are also reflected in audit results. The programs administered by Family Services Specialists meet the performance standards set forth by the Department of Health Care Services, the Department of Social Services, and Department of Education. The role of the Family Services Specialists in the Agency's Appeals Unit is to resolve applicant disputes on actions taken by the County. Over 90% of the cases are successfully resolved prior to the State hearing. On approximately 98% of the cases taken to State hearing, the County's action is upheld. Family Services Specialists in the Quality Control (QC) Unit receive a random sampling of cases to review and verify conformity with State and Federal tolerance levels for accuracy. Family Services Specialists take pride in delivering services in a compassionate and culturally responsive manner.

POLICY ISSUE:

Proclaiming the week of January 24, 2010 as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week supports the Board's priorities of ensuring a healthy community, a strong local economy, effective partnerships and efficient delivery of services.

STAFFING IMPACT:

There is no staffing impact associated with this request.

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WHEREAS, the County of Stanislaus takes great pride in recognizing Family Services Specialists who work with the community in administering public assistance programs and who strive for excellence in their work.

WHEREAS, Family Services Specialists administer programs that assist customers in accessing services that provide for their basic needs, including, food, shelter, health care and housing. In Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Family Service Specialists provided services to over 143,000 County residents, issued Cash and Food Stamp benefits exceeding \$130 million dollars and have assisted over 2,147 individuals in attaining employment.

WHEREAS, the benefits issued by the Family Services Specialists represents an economic value of \$25,633,491 to the County each month.

WHEREAS, Family Services Specialists support Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors Strategic Priorities and the mission of the Community Services Agency by successfully implementing Federal, State, and local mandated programs, practicing program integrity and promoting innovative effective business strategies while providing excellent customer service. Family Services Specialist staff is located throughout CSA's Divisions –Adult Services, Child and Family Services, Finance and Operations and StanWORKs.

WHEREAS, Family Services Specialists maintain the performance standards set forth by the Department of Health Care Services, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education.

WHEREAS, Family Services Specialists working in partnership with the General Assistance Supplemental Security Income Advocacy Program recouped \$389,646 in Fiscal Year 2008-2009 through Interim Assistance Repayments. In Fiscal Year 2008-2009, SIU fraud investigations, overpayments and over issuances totaling \$1,818,231, or 1.1% of the total benefits issued, were identified by SIU.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors does hereby proclaim the week of January 24, 2010 as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week and commend the work of Stanislaus County Family Services Specialists to all members of the community.