

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

*CAH*  
DEPT: Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA # \*A-6a

Urgent  Routine

AGENDA DATE January 10, 2012

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES  NO   
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES  NO

SUBJECT:

Proclaim the Week of January 22-28, 2012, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Proclaim the Week of January 22-28, 2012, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

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BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2012-007

On motion of Supervisor Chiesa, Seconded by Supervisor De Martini  
and approved by the following vote.

Ayes: Supervisors: Chiesa, Withrow, Monteith, De Martini and Chairman O'Brien

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:

ATTEST:

*Christine Ferraro*  
CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

Proclaim the Week of January 22-28, 2012, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week in Stanislaus County-Community Services Agency

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## **DISCUSSION:**

Stanislaus County employs Family Services Specialists at the Community Services Agency (CSA), Alliance Worknet, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and the Health Services Agency.

The Family Services Specialists at CSA play a critical role in administering programs and services in Stanislaus County by providing a safety net for needy individuals and families who lack basic necessities in life, such as food, shelter, clothing, and health care.

The CSA Family Services Specialist has many roles. The position's primary responsibility is to serve the public by determining their eligibility for public assistance programs, including Medi-Cal, CalFresh, Foster Care, Extended Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, Kin-GAP, CalWORKs, Welfare-to-Work, Refugee Assistance, Child Care, and General Assistance. They do this by interviewing customers, collecting relevant information, interpreting complex rules and regulations, ensuring accurate and timely benefit issuance, and providing customers with resources to help with immediate need situations. For many of the customers they see on a daily basis, the customers are at the most stressful and challenging time in their lives. The Family Services Specialist must help the customer navigate a very complex process to receive benefits. They must do this under demanding circumstances while providing excellent customer service to the public.

In Fiscal Year 2010-2011, over 175,000, or 30 percent of the County's residents relied on the Agency for benefits and services. The Family Services Specialists in the StanWORKs Division were responsible for the accurate issuance of over \$212.8 million in CalWORKs Cash Aid, Refugee Assistance, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, General Assistance, and CalFresh benefits.

Family Services Specialists provide employment services to families receiving CalWORKs through the Welfare-to-Work Program. Employment services are designed to assist families and individuals reduce barriers to and enhance opportunities for long-term employment. In Fiscal Year 2010-2011, 4,853 participants enrolled in the program; 1,566 received job placements.

Access to child care services is an essential element in assisting customers to obtain training, secure employment, and eventually become self-reliant. Family Services Specialists link parents with child care providers and issued payments on behalf of 1,600 children on a monthly basis. The Agency issued \$5,469,303 in direct payments to child care providers in Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Family Services Specialists assigned to the Foster Care unit partner with Social Workers, Probation Officers, Foster Care Providers, and Adoptive Parents to ensure that the children who are at-risk in our county are protected, safe, and their needs are provided for while they await their reunification with their families. The Foster Care FSS also make sure that the County's emancipated foster youth are connected to services they need to sustain self-sufficiency after they leave foster care by bridging the Foster Care program with CalFresh and Medi-Cal for seamless transition. Foster Care Family Services Specialists serve an average of 1,770 children per month in our county with approximately \$1.9 million in Foster Care, Adoption, KinGap, and Transitional Housing Program Plus benefits being issued on a monthly basis.

General Assistance is supported through the County General Fund. Family Services Specialists provide guidance and professional advocacy services to assist customers with the Social Security application

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process. As the result of this Supplemental Security Income (SSI) advocacy program, \$377,642 was recovered in assistance repayments in Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Family Services Specialists in the Agency's Program Integrity Section 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 2010-2011, Family Services Specialists in SIU were responsible for setting up \$2.2 million in overpayments and over issuances. This is 1% of the total benefits issued.

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 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. If the dispute is not resolved the FSS defends the County action before an Administrative Law Judge in a state hearing. In Fiscal Year 2010-2011 there were 989 hearing requests. Over 90 percent of the hearing requests were resolved prior to the scheduled hearing. 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. In Federal Fiscal Year 2010 the accuracy rate for CalFresh benefits was 98.1 percent.

Family Services Specialists providing service in Stanislaus County have experienced significant caseload increases in recent years. Like many valley counties, the prolonged economic decline in Stanislaus County has had significant and profound impacts on many individuals and families. High foreclosure rates and the remaining high unemployment rates have made it difficult for customers who have been struggling to recover financially. The unemployment rate in the County drastically increased from 8.0 percent in 2006 to an average of 17.0 percent in 2010-2011. As of September 2011, the double-digit rate remains at 15.1 percent. As a result, the number of residents accessing and receiving services administered by the Agency has grown to over 175,000 in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. From Fiscal Year 2007-2008 to Fiscal Year 2010-2011, the Agency experienced an increase in most of its public assistance programs: 24 percent in CalWORKs, 31 percent in General Assistance, 72 percent in CalFresh, 16 percent in Medi-Cal, and 3 percent in Foster Care.

#### **POLICY ISSUE:**

Proclaiming the week of January 22-28, 2012, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week supports the Board's priorities of A Healthy Community, a Strong Local Economy, Effective Partnerships, and Efficient Delivery of Public Services.

#### **STAFFING IMPACT:**

There is no staffing impact associated with this request.