

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 8, 2013

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Proclaim the Week of January 20-26, 2013, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week-Community Services Agency

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Proclaim the Week of January 20-26, 2013, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2013-7

On motion of Supervisor O'Brien, Seconded by Supervisor De Martini

and approved by the following vote,

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

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:

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 2011-2012, over 187,000, or 36 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 \$218.6 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 2011-2012, 4,949 participants enrolled in the program; 1,476 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 1,200 children on a monthly basis. The Agency issued \$4,258,543 in direct payments to child care providers in Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

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 are in foster care placements. Effective January 1, 2012, Assembly Bill 12 Extended Foster Care (EFC) allows benefits to youth up to the age of 21. The FSS ensures continued financial assistance to support these youth. 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 1,684 children per month in our county with approximately \$2.0 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 process. As the result of this Supplemental Security Income (SSI) advocacy program, \$346,027 was recovered in assistance repayments in Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

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 2011-2012, Family Services Specialists in SIU were responsible for setting up \$2.7 million in overpayments and over issuances. This is 1.2% 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 2011-2012 there were 1071 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 2011 the accuracy rate for CalFresh benefits was 95.1 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 October 2012, the double-digit rate is 13.9 percent. As a result, the number of residents accessing and receiving services administered by the Agency has grown to over 187,000 in Fiscal Year 2011-2012. From Fiscal Year 2008-2009 to Fiscal Year 2011-2012, the Agency experienced the following changes in most of its public assistance programs: increase of 8.1 percent in CalWORKs, decrease of 17.0 percent in General Assistance, increase of 54.7 percent in CalFresh, increase of 12.0 percent in Medi-Cal, and less than 1 percent decrease in Foster Care.

POLICY ISSUE:

Proclaiming the week of January 20-26, 2013, 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.

Proclaim the Week of January 20-26, 2013, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week in Stanislaus County-Community Services Agency
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Proclaim the Week of January 20-29, 2013, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week

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 and services to customers in accessing services in order to meet the customers' basic needs, which include food, shelter, health care and clothing. In Fiscal Year 2011-2012, over 187,000 or 36 percent of the County's residents relied on Family Services Specialists to determine their eligibility to public assistance programs, including Medi-Cal, CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps), Foster Care, Adoption Assistance Program, Kin_GAP, Extended Foster Care, CalWORKs, Welfare-to-Work, Refugee Assistance, Child Care, and General Assistance.

WHEREAS, the benefits issued by the Family Services Specialists were approximately \$218.6 million in Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

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 Specialists are located throughout CSA – Adult, Child, and Family Services Division, Program Integrity Section, and the StanWORKs Division.

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors does hereby proclaim the week of January 20-26, 2013, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week and commend the work of Stanislaus County Family Services Specialists to all members of the community.