

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

DEPT: CSA Community Services Agency

BOARD AGENDA # *A-6b

Urgent Routine

AGENDA DATE January 11, 2011

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT:

Proclaim the Week of January 23-29, 2011, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Proclaim the Week of January 23-29, 2011, as Family Services Specialist Recognition Week.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2011-027

On motion of Supervisor O'Brien, Seconded by Supervisor Withrow

and approved by the following vote,

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

Noes: Supervisors: None

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

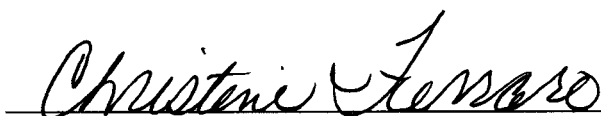
1) Approved as recommended

2) Denied

3) Approved as amended

4) Other:

MOTION:



ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

File No.

DISCUSSION:

Family Services Specialists 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.

In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, over 155,000, or 30% of the County's residents relied on Family Services Specialists to accurately, efficiently, and compassionately determine their eligibility to public assistance programs, including Medi-Cal, CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps), Foster Care, CalWORKs, Welfare-to-Work, Refugee Assistance, Child Care, and General Assistance.

Customers have many options to access these programs and services, including on-line via C4Yourself.com, phone, mail, and office visits at various sites located in Modesto, Hughson, Oakdale, and Turlock. In addition, Family Services Specialists assist the customers at health clinics in Riverbank, and the west side community, as well as a myriad of community events throughout the year. Community-based locations and outreach events are essential to informing the community about services available to meet their basic needs. Meeting customers in their neighborhood increases an opportunity not only to share information about the Agency's programs and services but also to promote economic stability, nutrition, health, and well being.

Like many valley counties, the prolonged economic decline in Stanislaus County has had significant and profound impacts on many individuals and families. The unemployment rate in the County drastically increases from 8.0% in 2006 to 16.0% in 2009, and to the highest rate at 19.0% in February 2010. As of October 2010, the double-digit rate remains at 16.2%. As a result, the number of residents accessing and receiving services administered by the Agency has increased from 119,554 in Fiscal Year 2006-2007 to over 155,000 in Fiscal Year 2009-2010. During this three-year period, the Agency experienced an increase in most of its programs: 27% in CalWORKs, 23% in General Assistance, 22% in Welfare-to-Work, 67% in CalFresh, 13% in Medi-Cal, and 9% in Foster Care. The only exception is in the Child Care Program, which experienced a 20% decrease.

In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, Family Services Specialists in the StanWORKs and Adult Services Divisions were responsible for the accurate issuance of over \$186.7 million in Cash Aid, Supportive Services, Refugee Assistance, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, and CalFresh benefits. In the first four (4) months of Fiscal Year 2010-2011, the amount of benefits issued has already exceeded \$68.1 million.

Family Services Specialists also 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. Welfare-to-Work participants are referred to services that assist in developing job skills through vocational training, work experience, and specialized assessments. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, 4,940 participants enrolled in the program; 1,584 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. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, Family Services Specialists linked parents with child care providers and issued payments on behalf of 1,200 families, including 2,100 children, enrolled and received child care assistance on a monthly basis. The Agency issued \$6,981,240 in direct payments to child care providers.

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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 reunification with their families. Foster Care Family Services Specialists serve 1,809 children in our county with approximately \$1,815,173 in Foster Care, Adoption, and KinGap benefits being issued on a monthly basis. Foster Care Family Services Specialists staff are diligent and committed to making sure that every dollar issued is accurate and timely. Foster Care Family Services Specialists provide extensive customer service to the providers, foster family homes and adoptive parents who receive these benefits to make sure children receiving services are able to access their benefits without delay or interruption. Foster Care Family Services Specialists are committed to making sure that our emancipated youth are connected to services they need to sustain self-sufficiency after they are of age by bridging the Foster Care program with Food Stamps and Medi-Cal for a seamless transition.

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, \$440,394 was recovered in assistance repayments in Fiscal Year 2009-2010.

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 2009-2010, SIU fraud investigations, overpayments and over issuances totaling \$2,385,055 or 1.5% 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 Federal Food and Nutrition Services, 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 at the lowest possible level. If the dispute is not resolved the Family Services Specialist writes a formal Statement of Position and defends the County action in a State Hearing. 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 in the CalFresh (Food Stamp) program. Family Services Specialists take pride in delivering services in a compassionate and culturally responsive manner.

POLICY ISSUE:

Proclaiming the week of January 23-29, 2011, 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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CONTACT PERSON:

Christine C. Applegate, Director 558-2500