



Agenda Date: 11/22/2005
Agenda Placement: 6B

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Natasha Merkuloff Nichols - Director
Child Support Services
REPORT BY: Natasha Merkuloff Nichols, Director of Child Support Services, 253-4250
SUBJECT: Expansion of public service hours

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Child Support Services requests authorization to expand public service hours to be 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Expanding hours during which the Department will take appointments will allow us to provide increased services to people who cannot come in during regular business hours.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

With a decrease in staffing due to budget constraints, the Department is in the process of analyzing how staff utilize their time. This analysis shows that staff members are having trouble keeping up with phone calls and meeting federal compliance time limits to perform certain child support processes. It was determined that staff are

spending a larger than expected amount of time seeing walk in customers, to the detriment of folks who have a scheduled appointment, either in person or on the phone. One of the reasons given by walk in customers for just dropping in is that they are unable to come here during normal business hours with any predicability. Walk in customers are problematic, since the case manager seeing them has not had the opportunity to review the case before hand. In many instances, an appointment needs to be scheduled in any case. The result is that the case worker spend two visits with a customer when one planned appointment would be sufficient. With lower staffing levels, streamlining our processes to make time to perform mandated functions is critical. It is the Department's goal to reduce the number of walk ins as much as possible.

Currently, office hours for Child Support are from 8am to 5pm, with the last scheduled appointment at 4:30pm. Child Support staff hours currently are from 7am to 5:30pm. The Department, with the Board's permission, would like to pilot an expanded public hour program for 6 months. Staff will be available from 7:30am to 5:30pm, with the last scheduled appointment being no later than 5pm. We believe that offering customers expanded opportunities to set appointments, will reduce the instances of walk ins.

We envision, with the Board's concurrence, that walk ins will be offered an appointment to fit their schedule, unless they have driven further than 30 miles. If a walk in customer has come a long way or has an issue that is urgent and cannot wait, the customer will be seen. All walk in customers will be urged to make an appointment in the future so that we may devote sufficient time to their particular needs.

With the Board's concurrence, the Department hopes to be able to reduce the walk in traffic substantially, which will allow our staff to focus on the needs of customers who have been waiting for service, either via telephone or via appointment, as well as to meet federal process requirements.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi