



Agenda Date: 8/8/2006
Agenda Placement: 6A

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Natasha Merkuloff Nichols - Director
Child Support Services
REPORT BY: Karina Castañeda, Staff Services Manager, 259-8289
SUBJECT: Renewal of County Agreement 6528 and Approval of Agreement with State of California for Loan of County Employees

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Child Support Services requests approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign the following agreements with the California Department of Child Support Services for the term of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 to provide reimbursement for services performed by County employees:

1. Renewal of Agreement No. 6528 (State No. 20-0055-07) for a maximum of \$92,865; and
2. Agreement (State No. 20-0067-07) for a maximum of \$95,972.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The action requests Board approval for the Child Support Services Department to renew one contract with the State of California to loan one fulltime Child Support Specialist (CSS). Additionally, the department request approval to loan an additional fulltime Child Support Specialist (CSS) to the State. The CSSs will serve as a subject matter expert as the State develops and implements the California Child Support Automated System (CCSAS). Staff will also assist in policy development. The Department has already received authorization to add two limited term CSS I positions to backfill the loaned positions so that the Department can meet the compliance requirements of the State Child Support Program while the County employees are on loan. All costs associated with the loaned employees are reimbursed to the County by the State.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	Yes
Where is it budgeted?	Child Support Services is a non general fund department, so there is no

impact to the General Fund. While the employees are on loan to the State, the department will backfill the positions with limited term (LT) positions. The funding provided by the State to the department will cover the cost of both LT positions. The LT positions will be for twelve (12) months, as the agreement is for twelve (12) months. If the contract is amended to extend the term for additional time, the positions will be extended for a corresponding time frame. There is no negative funding impact expected by the department as a result of this State contract

Is it Mandatory or Discretionary? Discretionary

Discretionary Justification: There are many advantages to the County and to the State of the employee loan program. When the employee is assigned to State duties, the State obtains the services of a subject matter expert in the field of child support, specifically a person who has worked directly with customers and a caseload, and understands on a practical level how the functionality of the automated system will affect the local agencies. The employee is also able to assist in developing policy that is effective and workable from the local perspective. For the County, that employee returns with detailed knowledge of the Statewide automated system, and will serve as a resource and trainer to assist the department with operational issues in the new automated system. The policies which originate with local agency employees are generally simple to translate into procedures at a local level. The State reimburses the county for all costs and the department is able backfill behind the loaned employee. This offsets somewhat the decrease in productivity in the department as a result of the loan of an experienced caseworker. The department feels it is worthwhile to loan these employees.

Is the general fund affected? No

Future fiscal impact: At this point, the contracts are set to expire in June of 2007. It is very possible the State will extend the contracts for an additional year, since CCSAS implementation will continue into calendar year 2008.

Consequences if not approved: The State will lose the services of a very experienced child support case workers and that will hinder the development of CCSAS as a user friendly tool. In the long run, the department will not have any in house experts in CCSAS.

Additional Information:

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

The State of California is in the process of developing and implementing the California Child Support Automated System (CCSAS), which will connect all counties in the State on one child support system as required by Federal law. Implementation of this system is a priority for many reasons, not the least of which is the elimination of the Federal penalties imposed on the State for not having a single Statewide system in place by 1998. In order to

obtain the technical and subject matter expertise required for implementation and transition, the State has approached counties about "borrowing" staff members to assist. Napa County already has one Child Support Specialist (CSS), Anita Sosa, who is on loan to the State as of September 1, 2005. The state is seeking approval for the loan of a second employee, Vickie Ruise. Both employees would be on loan through June 2007, and possibly longer.

The benefits of this "employee loan" program are several. For the State, they get an experienced child support services worker who knows the program at the local level. The employee not only can test and validate data, but can provide direct input regarding how program functionality would affect the local agencies and their staff. The goal is to make this system user friendly and toward that end, local employees must be available to provide constant input and feedback. Also, these employees are very familiar with current State policies, and because of their hands on knowledge, are valuable in assisting to develop new, practical policies. For the Department, the benefit is three fold. First, during the development stages, we have direct input to the State testing. The employee calls this agency, poses a situation and within an hour or two, we provide feedback and request certain functionality which would address the issue. Second, during implementation, we have a contact at the State to provide us with insight, guidance and information. And finally, post implementation when we are trying to work the bugs out, we will have an employee who has first hand knowledge of the system, and will be able to assist and train our staff. As for the policy side, the counties benefit from having staff who understand the program from the ground up assist in developing state wide policies .

Both Ms. Sosa and Ms. Ruise would continue to retain their incumbency in the permanent positions of Child Support Specialist, as well as all other benefits of County employment. During this Agreement, the employees will receive all credits that would accrue absent this agreement for the purposes of determining seniority, promotional status, retirement date and other employment benefits. The State will reimburse the County for employees' salary and benefits costs. The State will also reimburse the County for the employees' travel costs relating to travel to Rancho Cordova at the current IRS mileage rate and County per diem.

The request to the Board is to approve the renewal of Ms. Sosa's existing agreement which was set to expire in August 2006, and to grant initial approval to Ms. Ruise agreement. The latter agreement would be authorized retroactively to July 1, 2006. Ms. Ruise commenced her duties on July 1, 2006; however, it has taken the State more time than they anticipated to provide the agreement to the County.

The Board has already authorized the addition of the Limited Term positions to replace the loaned employees for the duration of each contract as part of the budget hearings. These positions will back fill the workload of the loaned employees, as well as assist the Department with conversion preparation work needed for successful implementation until the permanent employees return to the Department.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi