



DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.  
Director

**County of Los Angeles**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

Board of Supervisors

GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

June 6, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**MARCH 29, 2005, BOARD AGENDA ITEM 34, RE: ALTERNATIVE SERVICES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM CONTRACT**

At the March 29, 2005 Board Meeting, pursuant to agenda item #34, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) requested Board approval of amendments to two existing agreements for the provision of Alternative Services for Youth Program (ASFY) services. The current agreements are for the provision of ASFY services in Service Planning Area (SPA) 6. At that time, the Board approved the request and further directed DCFS to (1) determine those areas within Los Angeles County that currently have the highest need for ASFY program services; and (2) examine the possibility of expanding this program countywide.

**INTRODUCTION**

The ASFY program currently has the capacity to serve 340 youth who reside in SPA 6 at annual cost of \$485,602. Pursuant to the Board's directive, to fully expand the ASFY program countywide, DCFS estimates a total cost of \$1,600,000 annually to ensure provision of ASFY services to a total of 700 youth within all SPAs. Funding for the expansion of the ASFY program is to come from the Department's special services lines item that has been proposed in the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Assistance Budget.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION REGARDING THE ASFY PROGRAM**

Since its establishment in 1992 as an emancipation preparation program, the primary goal of the ASFY program is to provide support services to youth, ages 14 to 18, toward building a strong educational foundation. Readiness for the challenges of adulthood cannot be achieved without addressing the educational demands of today's society. Attainment of a High School Diploma or General Education Diploma is necessary for all young people, and particularly vital for those under the DCFS umbrella, already an at-risk population. The "dependent youth" who emancipate out of the system may experience placement changes resulting in interruptions and disruptions to their education, which may, in turn, cause an additional burden to the task of achieving educational goals. Subsequently, the necessary tools for successful emancipation are difficult to attain unless a strong means of support is in place.

DCFS data indicates that the ASFY program has been a successful approach to addressing the educational needs of dependent youth. Statistics from the ASFY program for 2002-2003 have demonstrated promising outcomes: 64% of youth were stabilized in their placements after entering the program; 66% of youth showed improvements in school grades; 65% of the seniors participating in the 2004 ASFY program successfully attained high school or general education diplomas.

### **ASSESSMENT OF COUNTYWIDE NEED**

While dependent youth face unique educational challenges, the quality of the schools available to them is also a significant factor impacting their success. Unfortunately, the quality of a high school education is not consistent throughout the various districts where youth reside. The California Department of Education has established the Academic Performance Index (API) in order to assess school performance throughout the State. In calculating a school's base API, the State used scores from standardized tests taken in 2002. These tests included the Stanford Achievement Test, Stanford 9 Tests, California Standards Test and the California High School Exit Examination. From those, California set the goal of State schools at a minimum of 800. It follows then that, the lower the API score, the poorer the student body performed as a whole on testing, which may be a reflection of the school's educational quality.

In conducting its assessment of countywide need, DCFS proposed that a correlation could be established between a school's API score and the need/justification for providing educational support through ASFY services to a percentage of the youth who attend those schools. What follows is a statistical analysis of the high schools within the Los Angeles Unified, Antelope Valley Union, Compton Unified, Long Beach Unified and Pasadena Unified School Districts across all SPAs. The "Number of High Schools" represents the total number of regular high schools located within each SPA's boundaries. The "Number of Youth" represents the breakdown by SPA of the total 6,704 youth, between the ages of 14 and 18, placed in out-of-home care, whose residences are located in zip codes eligible to attend the local regular and special education high schools.

**Service Planning Area 1 (Supervisory District 5)**

Number of Youth:	693
Number of High Schools:	9
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	0
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>592</b>

**Service Planning Area 2 (Supervisory Districts 3 and 5)**

Number of Youth:	684
Number of High Schools:	34
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	1
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>677</b>

**Service Planning Area 3 (Supervisory Districts 1, 4 and 5)**

Number of Youth:	1,356
Number of High Schools:	55
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	3
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>648</b>

**Service Planning Area 4 (Supervisory Districts 1, 2 and 3)**

Number of Youth:	356
Number of High Schools:	15
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	0
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>596</b>

**Service Planning Area 5 (Supervisory Districts 2, 3 and 4)**

Number of Youth:	90
Number of High Schools:	11
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	3
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>706</b>

**Service Planning Area 6 (Supervisory District 2)**

Number of Youth:	1,654
Number of High Schools:	24
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	0
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>540</b>

**Service Planning Area 7 (Supervisory Districts 1 and 4)**

Number of Youth:	716
Number of High Schools:	28
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	2
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>633</b>

**Service Planning Area 8 (Supervisory Districts 2 and 4)**

Number of Youth:	1,155
Number of High Schools:	35
Number of High Schools scoring in the 800 API range:	7
<b>Average API Score:</b>	<b>684</b>

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTYWIDE EXPANSION**

Currently, the ASFY program has a capacity to serve 340 youth, ages 14 to 18, who reside in SPA 6, which includes schools from the L.A. Unified and Compton Unified Districts. However, from the data above, it clearly follows that a far greater number of youth under DCFS supervision countywide would equally benefit from the receipt of ASFY services. As such, DCFS recommends that the ASFY program be expanded to include a capacity to serve a total of 700 students countywide, slightly above 10% of the target population from each SPA, at a total cost of \$1,600,00 annually. Because budget constraints limit the number of youth to be served, the following specific eligibility guidelines will apply: (1) youth, ages 14 to 18, who are significantly below grade level in all/most academic areas; (2) youth residing in out-of-home placement; (3) a willingness from the youth to participate in the program.

Funding for the expansion of the ASFY program is to come from the Special Services lines item that has been proposed in the 2005/06 DCFS Assistance Budget. The ASFY program appears to meet the criteria as specified by our agreement with the Chief Administrative Office, in that, these funds would be used to purchase direct services to our youth/families not covered by other funding sources.

Clearly, in proposing a county-wide program that would serve 700 youth at an annual cost of \$1,600,000, DCFS will establish a multi-faceted data-based performance/outcomes tracking system to monitor (1) school attendance (2) school credits earned (3) improvement in grade point average (4) college or trade school enrollment. Upon admission to the program, DCFS will comprehensively assess each youth's educational history, current educational status, vocational interests, including a review of the youth's most recent Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP) document. The contractor/provider will (1) develop a service plan to accomplish timely high school graduation and emancipation (2) participate in quarterly meetings to document its compliance in achieving educational, vocational, and emancipation goals with program youth; and (3) provide DCFS with detailed monthly reports, which will allow DCFS to measure the youth's progress toward achieving these goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of program services. In preparation for this countywide expansion, DCFS will be convening a workgroup, comprised of children's social workers, supervisors, and managers to devise an operational plan that will consist of well-defined objectives and methods.

I want to thank the Board for its support of the ASFY program, which has effectively provided educational support to many youth under DCFS supervision. DCFS youth throughout the County richly deserve the additional support so that they may be afforded the optimal opportunities for successful futures. If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:CS:JH:mf

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel