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County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

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January 29, 2007

ADOPTED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

19 FEB 20 2007

Sachi A. Hamai
SACHI A. HAMAI
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
385 Kenneth Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE OLDER YOUTH ADOPTION PROJECT PLAN AND APPROPRIATION ADJUSTMENT AUTHORITY (ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) – (4 VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), or her designee, to submit the attached plan to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for use of the Older Youth Adoption Project (OYAP) funding to increase permanency through adoptions for older dependent youth.

2. Delegate authority to the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to approve a Request for Appropriation Adjustment to increase appropriation and revenue by $1,250,000 upon receipt of CDSS' approval of the County's plan for OYAP. The OYAP allocation does not require a County match; therefore, there will be no impact on net County cost (NCC).

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

On July 12, 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill 1808 (Chapter 75, Statutes of 2006). This bill authorizes a project to ensure the successful adoption of older foster youth. It particularly targets children and youth over the age of 9 years who have been in foster care longer than 18 months and are with unrelated caretakers or in group homes. Under the provisions of the law, CDSS is authorized to appropriate $1,250,000 annually over a three year period to Los Angeles County for this purpose (see attached letter from Mary L. Ault, Deputy Director, Children and Family Services Division of the CDSS). The bill indicates that programs in the project counties should seek to create public-private partnership to maximize successes.

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The strategies planned for this funding are to:

1. Increase Family Finding activities with the current local participating private agencies. Family Finding includes an advanced internet search via US Search for relatives and friends of the birth parents, as well as extensive case reviews and interviews with the child, relatives, caregivers and other important people in the child's life in order to find permanent homes.

2. Partner with private adoption agencies that recruit locally and in various counties to implement intensive recruitment campaigns focusing on child-specific recruitment activities for older children.

3. Develop a program to partner with private business members to engage older youth in the recruitment process and utilize web-based technology for child-specific recruitment of adoptive families. This would involve youth partnering with business people to design web sites about themselves with pictures, biographies and streaming video toward the goal of finding permanent families. DCFS would monitor and use the web sites to find willing and appropriate permanent families for the children.

If these funds are not accepted and these programs are not implemented, then fewer youth will have access to the extra services needed to have a permanent family. Without these funds and programs, it will take longer for some youth to achieve permanency and many may not achieve it at all.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The recommended actions are consistent with the principles of the Countywide Strategic Plan Goals 4 (Fiscal Responsibility) and 5 (Children and Family Well-Being). Utilizing available State funding provides the County with the opportunity to enhance the likelihood for older at-risk youth in foster care to achieve permanency.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The OYAP allocation does not require a County match; therefore, there will be no impact on NCC. The funding will be incorporated into the FY 2006-07 Adopted Budget upon CDSS' approval of the County's plan.

Consistent with the provisions of the bill that authorized the OYAP funding, DCFS will seek opportunity to utilize the OYAP funding to supplement/match other funding opportunities (such as federal funding). However the implementation of the project will not be dependent upon the receipt of federal funding.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The three strategies meet the requirements by CDSS of partnering with the community. Family Finding has demonstrated substantial success in achieving permanency for older youth. The funds allocated through this bill will meet the expectation that DCFS will partner with private agencies and businesses to increase permanency for older youth.

This is not a contract nor will the Department be engaging in an MOU with CDSS. There is a requirement that the DCFS Director offer assurances to CDSS that: 1) the funds will be used solely for the purposes established in Welfare and Institutions Code 16124; 2) the County will participate in conference calls or meetings to assist CDSS in developing the requirements of the project; and 3) the County will comply with the data collection, reporting, and analysis requirements as established by CDSS in consultation with the participating counties.

Results of the project shall be reported to the Legislature by November 30, 2010.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

Approval of the recommended actions will allow DCFS to enhance services and try new creative approaches that are designed to improve the lives of children and families in all supervisorial districts by reducing the number of children in out-of-home care that exit the foster care system without a permanent family or connection. It would also shorten the timelines to permanency for youth under DCFS supervision, and it would particularly impact the over 9,000 children in non-related out-of-home care in Los Angeles County that do not have a permanent plan.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval of this request, instruct the Executive Officer/Clerk of the Board to send an adopted-stamped copy of this Board letter to:

1. Department of Children and Family Services
   Service Bureau 3
   532 E. Colorado Blvd.
   Pasadena, CA 91101
   Attention: Diane Wagner, Acting Deputy Director

2. Department of Children and Family Services
Budget Services Section
425 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, CA 90020
Attention: Tito Barin

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

Attachments (2)

c: Chief Administrative Officer
Auditor-Controller

Attachment B

Older Youth Adoption Project Application Form
Please return by October 16, 2006
To Permanency Policy Bureau
744 P Street, M.S. 14-66
Sacramento, California 95814

County: Los Angeles
Project Manager Sari Grant, Children Services Administrator III
Phone: (626) 229-3732 Email: gransa@dcfs.lacounty.gov
Anticipated Date of Board of Supervisors Approval: 01/23/07

Pre and Post Adoption Services
In the chart below, please indicate the services the county is planning to add (A) or expand (E) under this project. Also, please indicate if the services will be provided directly by the county, through a contract with a community based organization (CBO), or provided through reimbursement to the family.

County	CBO	Family	Services:	A	E
X	X	☐	Individualized or other recruitment efforts	☐	X
☐	☐	☐	Post adoption services, including respite care	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Behavioral health services	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Peer support groups	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Information and referral services	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Other locally designed services as appropriate	☐	☐
X	X	X	Relative search efforts	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Training of adoptive parents, foster youth, or mentoring families	☐	X
☐	☐	☐	Mediation services	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Facilitation of siblings in the same placement	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Facilitation of post adoption contact.	☐	☐
X	X	☐	Engaging youth in permanency decision making	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	Any service or support necessary to resolve any identified barrier to adoption. Please list, if known.	X	☐
				☐	☐

For the services that the county may add or expand, please describe briefly the county's strategy for doing this for each service category:

1. (E) Expand partnerships with community based agencies that partner with children and do family finding activities to search for past and present connections that could lead to permanency. This would also include facilitating these reconnections. Initial focus on children in congregate care.
2. (E)Contract with private agencies to do intensive and creative recruitment for children that do not have existing connections focusing on (but not limiting to) finding out of county families that LA County cannot recruit themselves.
3. (A) Hire a social worker to develop partnerships with people in the business community that would be willing to mentor/teach a child how to create his/her own web page or video. That person would help the child create his/her web page or video to put on the California Kids Connection adoption web site. The social worker would also work to feature the children with the mentors in business and professional newsletters.

Three-Year Project Budget:

State Fiscal Year	State Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total
2006/07	$1,250,000			
2007/08	$1,250,000			
2008/09	$1,250,000			
Total	$3,750,000			

Assurances:

The county will use the funds solely for the purposes established in Welfare and Institutions Code 16124.

The county will participate in conference calls or meetings to assist CDSS in developing the requirements of the project, including data collecting and reporting.

The county will comply with the data collection, reporting and analysis requirements as established by CDSS in consultation with the participating counties.

Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW	Susan Ploehn	12-20-06
Director's Name	**Director's Signature**	**Date Signed**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

January 12, 2007

Ms. Patricia Ploehn, Director
Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services
425 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, California 90020

Dear Ms. Ploehn,

This letter serves as Notice of Intent to Allocate Funds. In accordance with Assembly Bill 1808 (Chapter 75, Statutes of 2006) and All County Information Notices I-73-06 and 1-92-06, Alameda and Kern Counties, along with San Francisco City and County and Los Angeles County, have been selected to receive funding for the Older Youth Adoption (OYA) project.

Subject to annual appropriations, the funds designated in the legislation will be available through fiscal year 2008/2009. These funds will support activities to increase the successful adoptions of youth who are nine years or older and have been in unrelated foster care or in group homes for 18 months or more. In accordance with the legislation, each participating county's Board of Supervisors must adopt a resolution supporting OYA prior to implementation. Therefore, an allocation letter will be sent to each of the four counties after this office receives evidence that this has occurred.

If your county was not selected, we hope that the ideas generated through the application process will assist you now and in the future as you continue to find ways to increase permanency for older youth. Please convey my appreciation to your team for their hard work in preparing applications for the OYA project. This effort speaks to your dedication to improve the lives of older youth in foster care and group homes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (916) 657-2614, or have your staff call David Moyer in the Permanency Policy Bureau at (916) 653-6306, or by e-mail at david.moyer@dss.ca.gov. Again, thank you all for your commitment to improve the permanency and stability of older youth in foster care and group homes.

Sincerely,

MARY L. AULT
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division