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

Board of Supervisors
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June 4, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

NOTIFICATION OF EXECUTION OF CONTRACTS FOR COMMUNITY BASED MENTORING SERVICES (CBM)

This letter is to notify your Board that I have executed CBM contracts with two providers, namely: Children Uniting Nations, Inc. and David and Margaret Home, Inc. to provide mentoring to Foster Youth, in accordance with Board letter submitted by the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) and approved by your Board on March 3, 2009, attached.

If you have any questions or need additional information, you may call me at (213) 351-5600 or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

PSP: WC: RR:jc

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

Attachment (1)

INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
County of Los Angeles

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Sheriff, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department

CYNTHIA BANKS
Director, Community and Senior Services

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UCLA Medical Center

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THOMAS M. REEVES
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County Prosecutors Association

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Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner

JOHN SCHUNHOFF, PH.D.
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Chief, Signal Hill Police Department
Police Chiefs Association

MARVIN SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director, Mental Health

ROBERT TAYLOR
Chief Probation Officer

JOHN WAGNER
Director, California Department of Social Services

BERNARD WARNER
Chief Deputy Secretary, California Department Of Corrections and Rehabilitation

DAPHNA ZIMAN
Appointee, Board of Supervisors

4024 N. DURFEE AVENUE
EL MONTE, CA 91732
(626) 455-4585 FAX (626) 444-4851

DEANNE TILTON, Executive Director
EDIE SHULMAN, Assistant Director

February 5, 2009

HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Los Angeles
383 Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND TREATMENT FUNDING (AB 2994 SURPLUS CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve funding allocations from surplus funds available through AB 2994 for two Board supported programs: $68,786/year for two years for a Pilot Program for Foster Child Visitation with Incarcerated Parents and $1 million/year for two years for the development and provision of Mentoring Services for foster youth.

2. Authorize the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to enter into contractual agreements with Friend's Outside (FO) for the Foster Child Visitation for Incarcerated Parents Program, and Children Uniting Nations (CUN) and David and Margaret Group Homes (David and Margaret) for Foster Youth Mentoring Services Programs.

BACKGROUND

In 1982, the Governor of California signed into law two bills aimed at preventing and treating child abuse and neglect. The first bill, Assembly Bill (AB) 1733/Papan (Chapter 1398, Statutes of 1982), authorized the allocation of state funding to counties for child abuse prevention and intervention services offered by public and private, non-profit agencies.

The second law, AB 2994/lmbrecht (Chapter 1399, Statutes of 1982), established a County Children's Trust Fund for the purpose of funding child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention programs operated by private, nonprofit organizations. AB 2994 requires that $4.00 of any fee for a certified copy of a birth certificate shall be paid to a County Children's Trust Fund.

Both of these laws provide that a designated multi-disciplinary child abuse council shall develop and recommend funding priorities to the Board of Supervisors. In Los Angeles County, the designated child abuse council is the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN).

We are recommending funding of two programs both of which fulfill the intent of Motions unanimously adopted by your Board. The recommendation for the pilot program on visitation for incarcerated parents is directly responsive to the July 25, 2006 unanimous Board Order that DCFS work with the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department in developing a program that enhances services and resources for incarcerated parents whose children have been placed in foster care. The recommendation for funding of foster youth mentoring programs is responsive to the January 4, 2005 Board Order instructing DCFS and ICAN to work toward achieving the goal of providing a mentor for every foster child by the year 2010.

Copies of these Board Motions are attached.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has the responsibility for monitoring the amount of funds available through both AB 1733 and AB 2994. DCFS notified ICAN that there was a surplus of funds available through AB 2994 (please see attached spread sheet indicating the anticipated surplus amount). As noted, this legislation clearly states that these funds can only be given to a private nonprofit organization for the purpose of identifying, preventing and treating child abuse and neglect.

ICAN is requesting approval for two proposals for the use of these funds. One proposal is for a pilot program to provide visitation for foster children with incarcerated parents. The other proposal is to partially fund a mentoring services demonstration project for foster youth through two community based non-profit organizations, Children Uniting Nations (CUN) and David and Margaret Group Homes (David and Margaret) identified as qualified mentoring services agencies from a Request for Proposals (RFP) process initiated in 2007 by DCFS. The department was subsequently unable to allocate these funds due to budget limitations, therefore a shorter and less costly two-year demonstration project is now proposed.

Foster Child Visitation with Incarcerated Parents

The most recent data available indicates that DCFS serves over 3,600 children whose parents are imprisoned. A significant number of these incarcerated parents are women who were the primary caregivers for their children prior to imprisonment. Through this pilot program, Friend's Outside, in collaboration with DCFS and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, will work to address means to decrease the emotional trauma experienced by children resulting from their parents' incarceration. The program will create opportunities for improved contact between the parent and child and ensure that these relationships are nurtured. In addition, increased parent-child visitation has proved to have an impact in decreased recidivism and decreased time to reunification within the child welfare and criminal justice systems.

Foster Youth Mentoring

Research is clear that youth in foster care can derive great benefits from a strong mentoring relationship with a caring and committed adult. This research has shown that as a result of a positive mentoring relationship, there can be reduced absenteeism from school due to decreased truancy, improved academic performance, increased placement stability and a reduction in disciplinary incidents.

Funds that are proposed for Mentoring services are designed to fill a void that was created in the current economic climate. In February 2008, DCFS and the Probation Department tentatively selected two Community Based Mentoring Agencies, CUN and David and Margaret, to be the recipients of contracts that would provide a minimum of 800 youth in foster care with a mentor utilizing $2.5 million from the DCFS budget. Unfortunately, DCFS was unable to identify a funding source for these tentative contracts. ICAN is recommending that surplus funds in the amount of $1 million/year for two years be authorized from the Children's Trust Fund. As a result, the number of youth in foster care to be matched with a mentor would be closer to a minimum of 400 youth.

More in-depth information regarding both of these programs is attached to this letter.

Review Process

As with all proposals that come to ICAN through AB 1733 or AB 2994, ICAN engaged in a very serious and lengthy process to review and evaluate both of these proposals. The proposals were first presented to ICAN's Operations Committee to determine if there was multi-disciplinary support for these programs. Once the Operation's Committee indicated support for both proposals, ICAN formed a special Ad Hoc Group comprised of members from numerous County and City agencies including the District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Department of Public Social Services, Department of Health Services, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Los Angeles Sheriffs Department, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and the Community Child Abuse and Councils.

This Ad Hoc Group held face-to-face meetings and engaged in an extensive process of emails and phone calls to vet these proposals so that any concerns regarding the proposals could be addressed, and to reach consensus regarding recommending approval for funding both proposals. During this process, the Ad Hoc Group made some significant improvements to the proposals.

ICAN staff then prepared an Action Item (attached to this letter) to be voted on at the January 12, 2009 ICAN Policy Committee meeting to obtain approval for both proposals. The Policy Committee unanimously approved allocating the requested funds for these two programs.

ICAN is now seeking your Board's approval for the special allocations of surplus AB 2994 funds for these two programs.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact on the County. AB 2994 funds are birth certificate surcharge funds deposited into the County's Children's Trust Fund. As indicated in the attachment from DCFS regarding the adopted budget for Fiscal Year 2008/09 there was an allocation of $5,537,000 through AB 2994 and an additional $3, 816,000 left over from the prior year, for a total of $9,353,000. The amount that has been determined to be spent in this fiscal year (which includes the proposed funding allocations requested in this Board letter) is $5,863,760 which will leave an additional surplus of $3,489,000. ICAN will work with your Board to develop a process for allocating any additional surplus funding available through AB 2994.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

DCFS has responsibility for administering contracts between the County and private, non-profit community based agencies that receive funding through AB 2994. The overall goal of this funding is to support child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment efforts and activities to help protect the families and children of Los Angeles County.

Respectfully submitted,

Deanne Tilton
Executive Director
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)

DT:es

Attachments

c: Sheriff Leroy Baca, ICAN Chairperson
William Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Patricia Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Robert Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
ICAN Policy Committee
ICAN Operations Committee

REVISED AGN. NO._____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE July 25, 2006

A significant number of foster children in Los Angeles County have parents who are in county jail or in state prison. There is limited research and few reliable statistics that fully capture the scope of the problem, however, recent studies indicate that there are 97,000 children statewide with parents in county jail. The harsh realities of incarceration pose significant challenges for a child to maintain a connection to their parent. For a child in foster care, this presents an even more significant barrier towards eventual family reunification, which is the ideal outcome that the Department of Children and Family Services works to facilitate.

Currently, there is no effective means or support for foster children to nurture an appropriate relationship with their incarcerated parent, or to even explore the possibility of reunification after the parent is released from jail. Minimal contact such as letter writing and phone calls are difficult to maintain, visitations are limited, and the parent has no consistent means by which to communicate with their child's social worker, if such interaction is allowed in the family reunification plan approved by the court.

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ANTONOVICH	_____

There is in place a highly successful model that may be applicable in Los Angeles County. The San Francisco Department of Human Services works with Friends Outside to address the special needs and concerns of incarcerated parents and their children in foster care. The agency acts as a liaison to the department, participates in case conferences, and acts as a general resource to the incarcerated parent and works with them inside the correctional facility where the parent is incarcerated.

I believe that a direct service such as this to incarcerated parents and their children will greatly enhance the chances of family reunification and enhance the well being of the child who has to cope with the challenge of foster care.

I, THEREFORE MOVE, that the Department of Children and Family Services work with the Sheriff's Department, and report back to the Board in 60 days on the progress in developing ~~on the feasibility of implementing~~ a program similar to the San Francisco/Friends Outside model, that enhances services and resources for incarcerated parents whose children have been placed in foster care, for cases wherein such interaction is allowed in the family reunification plan approved by the court.

I, FURTHER MOVE, that the Department of Children and Family Services work with the ~~DCFS~~ Research ~~Advisory Board to develop~~ Consortium to determine the feasibility of conducting a research project that establishes much needed statistical information as well as explores the issues surrounding parent incarceration and the impact on children in foster care.

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REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE January 4, 2005

As we all know, children in foster care are among the most vulnerable members of our society. Although some foster children now have mentors, most do not. Much needs to be done before every foster child has that important helping hand to guide them. Qualified mentors can provide the support and guidance these children so desperately need to face the challenges of life in out-of-home care.

In recognition of this critical need for mentors, the President of the United States has declared January 2005 as National Mentoring Month. In addition, the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) has formed a Task Force to focus on the creation of guidelines as well as to increase the number of available trained mentors for our young people.

I, THEREFORE MOVE THAT the Board of Supervisors joins with the President of the United States in declaring January 2005 as National Mentoring Month, and further that

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the efforts of ICAN and all foster child mentoring programs be commended for their commitment to having a positive impact the health and well-being of Los Angeles County's foster children.

In that foster children are the primary responsibility of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), I am requesting the Director of DCFS to assume the leadership role with the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect in achieving the goal of providing a mentor for every foster child by the year 2010. I further move that status reports be provided to the Board of Supervisors by the ICAN Task Force on Mentoring as appropriate.

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INCARCERATED PARENTS PROJECT

January 12, 2009

Incarcerated Parents Project
Proposal Addendum

I. Eligibility criteria for the mothers at Century Regional Detention Center (CRDF)

Mothers will meet one of the following criterion:

- Parents whose children may be at risk of detention by DCFS, **or**
- Parents with open DCFS case/referral which are serviced by the Lakewood office. It is expected that the project will be expanded to include additional DCFS offices after an agreed upon pilot period, e.g., six months, is completed and evaluated, assuming sufficient resources are available.

Mothers will meet all of the following criteria:

- Parent will be mentally stable [to be determined by the Children's Services Worker (CSW) in collaboration with the Friends Outside Case Manager]. The Friends Outside Case Manager will assess if a mother who requires psychotropic medication is on her meds prior to the visit in order to ensure the parent has sufficient internal resources for a productive visit.
- Parent cannot be under the influence of controlled substances or in a state of severe withdrawal during the visits.
- Parent must be willing to comply with visitation restrictions and guidelines to include: (1) no discussion during the visit about the mother's DCFS *or* criminal case; (2) no promises about release dates or other issues that could lead to disappointment for the child.

Note: For parents participating in contact programs, such as TALK ("Teaching and Loving Kids"), the mother must be enrolled in and attending parenting classes.

II. Protocol for arranging visitation

Requests for Visitation between Mothers and their Children

- Requests for visitation may be initiated through a variety of sources, to include the CSW, Friends Outside staff, incarcerated mothers, caregivers or family members, or the children.
- Requests for visitation will be submitted to the DCFS Case Aide assigned to the project and/or to the Friends Outside Case Manager. The Friends Outside Case Manager will maintain a log of all visitation requests.
- Requests for visitation will be forwarded to the CSW and Case Aide, who will screen the requests for suitability. Factors that will be considered include the following: age and maturity of the child, reason for incarceration, and relevant court orders.

Following Court Orders

The following specific steps will be taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with all protective and/or restraining orders:

- Friends Outside's Case Manager will contact the appropriate DCFS CSW prior to initiating visitation to determine whether the incarcerated parent has a restraining order which limits access to the child and, if so, the nature of those limits. This

information will be recorded in the case notes and will include the person who provided the information, date, and time of call.

- The Friends Outside Case Manager will then contact the Court Clerk or the Public Defender/Attorney of Record to determine whether there is a criminal protection order which limits access to the child, and, if so, the nature of those limits (the Case Manager is able to determine in which court the case is being heard and the name of the Attorney/Public Defender via jail-based computers). This information will be recorded in the case notes and will include the person who provided the information, date, and time of call.

  The Friends Outside Case Manager will begin to facilitate parent/child contact only after obtaining clearances from both court systems.

- For evaluation and data collection purposes, the Friends Outside's Case Manager will document via a monthly log all requests which were denied due to protective orders, including the type of order and the nature of the limits to parent/child contact*.

- DCFS and Friends Outside staff will make quarterly reviews of the reasons for denial of visitation based on the protective orders to determine whether the denial was justified (e.g., contact would/could have jeopardized child safety). These reviews will seek to identify trends which may indicate that visitation might have occurred had proper monitoring or supervision been provided. Any changes in policy and procedures will be developed with input from the Public Defenders Office, District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and other relevant parties, including ICAN.

Scheduling Visitation

- Once it is determined that visitation is appropriate, the CSW and/or the DCFS Case Aide will contact the Friends Outside Case Manager who will begin to make arrangements.

- The Friends Outside Case Manager will keep a calendar of the scheduled visitation, update the schedule, and will forward the schedule to the appropriate Sheriff's Department personnel a minimum of one week in advance whenever possible.

- The Friends Outside Case Manager will notify the CSW and/or DCFS Case Aide if there are any necessary modifications to the visitation schedule as a result of lock downs, changes in the parent's housing, illnesses, etc. In these cases, the CSW or Case Aide will contact the caregiver and child to inform them of the reason for the cancelled visit.

- The CSW will notify the Friends Outside Case Manager of any modifications to the visitation, based on child/caregiver issues. In these cases, the Friends Outside Case Manager will inform the mother of the reason for the cancelled visit.

Facilitating Visitation

- The CSW, Caregiver, Visitation Monitor (Friends Outside Case Manager or other designated DCFS monitor) and parent will carefully plan the visitation, to include preparing the participants for the visit, monitoring the visit, and debriefing the participants after the visits, as well as providing feedback to ensure that issues pertaining to the parent/child relationship are addressed and resolved as expeditiously as possible.

- The visitation will be monitored by the Friends Outside Case Manager (or trained volunteer**) or a County employee who will meet the caregiver at the jail (caregivers must wait in the waiting area during visitation unless previously cleared by both DCFS and the Sheriff's Department).

- In addition to the monitored visits, the Friends Outside Case Manager will assist county employees (SCSWs, CSWs, Case Aides, etc) to schedule and facilitate visitation between children and their incarcerated mothers.

** Friends Outside has had a corps of Volunteer Jail Visitors who have worked in the county jails for more than 30 years. A match to the program will be the provision of trained volunteers and student interns from California State University, Los Angeles, who can provide in-kind support to this project.

MENTORING LA COUNTY YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

January 12, 2009

Mentoring LA County Youth in Foster Care
DCFS/Probation Fact Sheet
ICAN Policy Meeting
January 12, 2009

Foster Care Mentoring Plan Facts

- 2005: LA County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion ordering that a mentor be provided for every child in foster care by the year 2010.
- There are approximately 8,351 DCFS youth and 1,050 Probation youth who are 10 years or older and in out of home care; approximately 150 have mentors.
- DCFS and Probation have a goal of mentoring an additional 400 youth in foster care by the end of 2009.
- Youth Criteria:
  - ✓ Youth 10 years or older and in out of home care (including relative care) at least 2 years.
  - ✓ Referral should be limited to youth who has no plan for reunification or a permanent connection.
- To meet this goal, in February 2008 DCFS and Probation selected two Community Based Mentoring Agencies as contract recipients.
- Due to budget constraints, previously identified funding within the Department has been reallocated. As a result, the agencies' contracts have been placed on hold.

Needs

- Funding in the amount of $2.0M ($1.0M per year) to provide mentoring to 400 youth in foster care for at least two years.
- Objectives: To assist programs with building capacity, to develop community partnerships, to leverage resources and to provide resources/support to assist with sustainability.

Role of DCFS & Probation

- Identify, screen and recruit youth.
- Promote the mentoring programs and obtain support to/from county staff and caregivers.
- Participate in community mentoring efforts and act as a resource for programs.
- Assist programs to identify and obtain funding sources for long-term sustainability.
- Monitor programs and outcomes to ensure quality and child safety.

Role of Community Based Mentoring Agencies

- Ensure youth in foster care are mentored according to contract guidelines and mentoring's best practices.
- Recruit mentors and partner with other community agencies that can provide support for mentoring relationships.
- Identify and obtain funding sources for long-term sustainability.
- Collect, monitor and maintain accurate data in order to evaluate program outcomes.
- Provide the Department with monthly, quarterly and annual reports detailing outcomes.

Other Support

- ICAN Associates in partnership with DCFS, Probation and other community stakeholders has developed and made available to mentoring programs: 1) A Best Practices Guide for Mentoring Youth in Foster Care 2) A Mentor Recruitment DVD.
- Mentoring programs can also apply for up to 40 hrs free program technical assistance annually from the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS).

Outcomes

- The agencies will have an evaluation component. Specific performance outcome measures include the following: reduced absenteeism from school due to truancy, increased placement stability and a reduction in discipline incidents.

Benefits to Funding These Contracts

- Provides youth in foster care with the opportunity to connect with a role model and possible lifelong connection.
- Displays support for mentoring within LA County to agencies, mentoring programs and potential funders.
- Helps support LAMM/ICAN's initiative to develop community collaboratives and sustain mentoring in LA County.
- Complies with the Board's mandate.

SPECIAL FUNDS
CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT PREVENT PROGRAM FUND

CLASSIFICATION	FY 2004/05 ACTUAL	FY 2005/06 ACTUAL	FY 2006/07 ACTUAL	FY 2007/08 ACTUAL	FY 2008/09 ADOPTED BUDGET
ALLOCATION	$3,322,778	$3,435,855	$4,409,183 (1)	$2,107,000 (1)	$5,537,000 (1)
LEFT OVER FROM PRIOR YEAR	2,234,000	2,235,000	3,200,000	4,653,000	3,816,000
AVAILABLE FUNDS	**$5,556,778**	**$5,670,855**	**$7,609,183**	**$6,760,000**	**$9,353,000**
AMOUNT SPENT	**$3,321,716**	**$2,471,261**	**$2,955,958**	**$2,943,879**	**$5,863,760 (2)**
UNUSED FUNDS	**$2,235,000**	**$3,200,000**	**$4,653,000**	**$3,816,000**	**$3,489,000 (3)**

AB 2994 FUND DESCRIPTION:

The Child Abuse/Neglect Prevention Program Fund was established by Assembly Bill 2994 (Chapter 1399 of 1982) to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services to individuals and families through contracts with private agencies. The Program is financed through special fees collected for birth certificates.

(1) The allocation includes the cancel reserve designation and appropriation for contingency.

(2) The projected expenditure amounts for FY 2008/09 reflects an additional $1.5 million for Upfront Assessments, $1 million for mentoring services, and $68,786 for incarcerated parents program. The ongoing contract amount is $2.1 million.

(3) The unused funds includes $1.5 million for Upfront Assessment, $1 million mentoring services, and $68,786 for incarcerated parents program for next year (FY 09-10).

ACTION ITEMS
January 12, 2009

AB 2994 PREVENTION ALLOCATION

It is recommended that the ICAN Policy Committee support allocation of surplus AB 2994 funds for the following two programs:

1) **Pilot Program for Visitation For Incarcerated Parents**
   Funds to go to Friend's Outside, a community based 501 (c) 3 organization
   Amount Requested:
   Year 1: **$68,786**
   Year 2: **$68,786**
   Budget also has matching funds from Friend's Outside and the Department of Children Services (DCFS) in the amount of **$56,732**

Reason for Funding: The most recent data available indicates that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) serves over 3,600 children whose parents are imprisoned. Of these, approximately 2% have Family Reunification (FR) case plans ordered by the Dependency Court with another 56% receiving Permanency Planning (PP) services. DCFS is also concerned about the increasing number of women serving time in jails and its impact on child abuse and neglect. Many of these are mothers who were the primary caregivers for their children prior to imprisonment.

Thus, DCFS will proactively and collaboratively work with the Sheriff's Department and the community agency, Friend's Outside, to address means to: 1) decrease the emotional trauma experienced by children resulting from the parents' incarceration; 2) create opportunities for improved contact between parent and child to ensure that relationships are nurtured and bonding improved; 3) increase visitation in the jail since parent-child visitation has proven to have an impact in decreased recidivism and decreased time to reunification within the child welfare and criminal justice systems; and 4) increase parents' participation in available services (such as parenting classes) so that upon release, parents can integrate behavioral changes and lessons learned to provide healthier homes for their children.

DCFS plans the commencement of a 24-month pilot program concentrating on working with incarcerated parents at the Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF) in Lynwood, currently the County's only jail for women.

2) **Community Based Mentoring**
   Funds to go to Community Based 501 (c) 3 mentoring organizations
   Amount Requested:
   Year 1: $1 million
   Year 2: $1 million

Reason for Funding: In February 2008, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department tentatively selected two Community Based Mentoring Agencies, Children Uniting Nations and David and Margaret, to be the recipients of contracts that would provide a minimum of 800 youth in foster care with a mentor (now 400 youth given decrease in funding). Due to the current budget situation, DCFS has been unable to identify a dedicated funding source to fund these contracts and the contracts have been placed on hold.

In 2005, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion supporting efforts to provide a mentor for every foster child by the year 2010. These contracts were designed to facilitate accomplishment of this important goal.

Research is clear that youth in foster care can derive great benefits from a strong mentoring relationship with a caring and committed adult. This research has shown that as a result of a positive mentoring relationship there can be reduced absenteeism from school due to truancy, improved academic performance, increased placement stability and a reduction in disciplinary incidents, to name a few. Funding of these contracts will allow for hundreds of youth in foster care to be matched with mentors who can provide them with the positive support, guidance and friendship that they often lack in their lives.