County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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November 22, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

JULY 25, 2006 MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KNABE RE: HOW THE CHILD WELFARE IMPROVEMENT FUND CAN BE LEVERAGED TO FURTHER MENTORING EFFORTS

On July 25, 2006, in response to a motion by Supervisor Knabe, the Board ordered the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in consultation with the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN), to report back in 45 days as to how the $98 million Child Welfare Improvement Fund can be leveraged to further mentoring efforts. The Department received an extension until November 22, 2006, to finalize the plans for providing mentoring services.

The Department is working in collaboration with ICAN to assure the most fair and expeditious process for the funds to be effectively expended, thereby strengthening the foundation for the growth of the countywide mentoring effort for foster youth. The Department projects the availability of up to $22.8 million in FY 06-07 in new State Child Welfare Improvement Funds. The Department plans to spend $2.5 million on mentoring services for youth in out-of-home care, youth at risk of placement and for probation youth in out-of- home care.

The Department and the Department of Probation (Probation) have established leadership roles in ICAN's two committees: Los Angeles Mentoring Model (LAMM) and Mentoring Resource Distribution Committee (MRDC). LAMM is a countywide coalition to enhance community engagement and to assure that LA County meets the vision that every foster child, who would like one, has a mentor by 2010. MRDC is a committee formed to focus on the distribution of resources. It is comprised of only county, city, and government agency representatives to avoid conflict of interest, or the appearance of conflict of interest.

DCFS will complete two solicitations in FY 06-07 for mentoring services. One new solicitation will be for Community-Based Mentoring Services at an annual cost of $2,000,000. A mentoring program for each Service Planning Area (SPA) will be developed by contracting for services with community-based organizations. The community-based organizations will recruit, screen, train and monitor adults to be matched as mentors for DCFS and Probation supervised children. The annual budget per contract will be approximately $250,000 per program in each SPA.

Another solicitation will be for Academic Mentoring Centers at an annual cost of $500,000. Five Academic Mentoring Centers will be developed in Los Angeles County in middle schools in areas with high numbers of DCFS and Probation supervised youth. These Academic Mentoring Centers will work in collaboration with the school districts and community-based organizations to recruit, screen, train, assign, and monitor adults to provide academic mentoring services. Each Academic Mentoring Center will be allocated $100,000 for services in FY 06-07.

The competitive solicitation process for the contracted services will not be completed and awards made until Spring 2007, and it is expected that a significant unexpended part of the $2.5 million will be available for one-time uses in FY 06-07. This will be allocated for a number of purposes, which could include but are not limited to the following areas:

- live-scan equipment to be dedicated to mentoring;
- consulting support to help with training on mentoring;
- support events for mentors and youth;
- administrative program costs such as software and development of recruitment material.

The level of funding for both solicitations was made in consultation with ICAN. Community input on recommended services for one-time and ongoing funding will be invited from the ICAN LAMM Committee. DCFS will get input from ICAN MRDC on the allocations of one-time funds for FY 06-07.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:LP:lp

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect