

Expansion of CarePortal Services to Address the Needs of Families in Crisis

Faith communities have long been known as pillars of society, equipped with the ability to provide vulnerable children and families with safe spaces, compassion, care, and supportive services along with critical tangible resources. In fulfilling their mission to care for those in need, faith-based institutions have provided volunteers, donations, shelter, support programs, and other services. In recognition of the intrinsic value faith-based engagement brings to child welfare, on September 25, 2018, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion directing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Center for Strategic Partnerships (the Center) to develop a faith-based strategy and program to work with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Houses of Worship (HOW) in a shared goal of serving children and families throughout the County.

As the largest child protection services agency in the nation, DCFS serves thousands of youths and families, with many expressing their desire and comfort with receiving services from FBOs and HOWs. Because they are often working closely with families and communities in crisis, FBOs and HOWs can refer children, transition age youth, caregivers or families to a wide range of community-based services that can help stabilize the family system before more invasive interventions are necessary. Families that are connected and feel supported have greater chances of becoming healthy families that ultimately strengthen their communities, especially in times of crisis.

MOTION

MITCHELL _____

HORVATH _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

SOLIS _____

In 2020, during the COVID pandemic, children, youth and families who were already vulnerable were at higher risk of system involvement due to increased isolation and difficulty getting their basic needs met. The Global Orphan Project offered to provide DCFS with access to their CarePortal technology platform at no cost, allowing DCFS, schools, nonprofits, and other child-serving agencies to collaborate with faith-based and community partners to meet the needs of children and families in crisis in real-time. On September 1, 2020, DCFS signed a Non-Financial Partnership Agreement with the Global Orphan Project and used a phased implementation strategy to launch CarePortal services in 19 DCFS regional offices delivering tangible items and goods to children, youth, and families interfacing with the child welfare system.

Since September 2020, CarePortal services have been provided in eight (8) Service Planning Areas (SPAs) and 19 DCFS regional offices by delivering tangible items and goods to children and families in need. CarePortal has also rendered services to assist kinship placements with the goal of preserving such placements through the Kinship Care Support Initiative. During the Los Angeles County fire disasters in January 2025, CarePortal responded to the crisis by delivering critical support to systems-involved youth and families impacted or displaced by the fires. CarePortal has provided training and resources to FBOs, HOWs and child-serving agencies with the goals of keeping children safe, helping children achieve timely and sustained permanency, improving the well-being of children and families, and reducing or avoiding costs to child-serving agencies.

Since the establishment of the non-financial partnership agreement between DCFS and CarePortal in 2020, dozens of DCFS faith-based liaisons in eight (8) SPAs and 19 DCFS regional offices have utilized CarePortal's care sharing technology as a critical tool in their work to serve thousands of children and families in crisis across the County, with a primary emphasis on prevention and early intervention to help keep children with their families out of foster care when possible and safely. DCFS uses CarePortal to help deliver positive outcomes for the safety, security, and well-being of children and families under its supervision, such as helping to prevent children from entering foster care, strengthening biological families, helping establish or preserving foster care, kinship or adoptive placements, helping children reunify with their biological

families, supporting youth as they age out of foster care, supporting children's educational needs, and supporting expectant mothers.

As of September 30, 2025, CarePortal's network has served over 4,300 children and generated approximately \$2,600,000 in economic impact in response to requests submitted by the Faith Based Liaisons for the needs of identified children and families. According to data from more than 2,000 reviews by agency workers regarding their experience with CarePortal in Los Angeles County:

- The average satisfaction rating is 4.9 stars out of 5;
- 99% agreed that partnering with the faith-based community made them feel more supported in their work; and,
- 99% agreed that meeting the request helped improve the well-being of the family and child(ren) involved.

While DCFS would benefit from the expansion of CarePortal services to the Department's full scope of programs serving children and families in crisis countywide, CarePortal does not have the capacity to expand their services without funding support. DCFS has identified one-time State Block Grant (SBG) dollars that can be used to support this expansion for the next two years.

The expansion of CarePortal in Los Angeles County using SCG funds would support prevention and early intervention efforts. CarePortal has established infrastructure to expand services and immediately utilize these specific funds to assist and serve additional children and families by:

- Providing additional personnel to expand the CarePortal Platform accessibility;
- Expanding access to additional DCFS programs, including the Youth Development Services Division, Extended Foster Care Services, and the Authentic Youth Engagement section (to specifically serve adolescent young adults to age 21), Parents in Partnership (to serve parents), Resource Family Support Services (to assist foster and kinship care providers), Special Immigrant Services Section (to assist youth), Medical Case Management Services Section (to assist children and youth with medical needs), Child Protection Hotline and the Emergency Response Command Post (to serve

families initially referred to DCFS as well as other child and family-serving agencies in Los Angeles County);

- Providing services and support for up to 7,000 children and their families;
- Providing training for community stakeholders to centralize and access resource requests and acquisitions;
- Providing ongoing support for CarePortal to DCFS and other child and family-serving community agency partners; and
- Building the ecosystem of community agencies, churches, businesses, local non-profits, and civic organizations to expand services to children and families in crisis in collaboration with DCFS and other agency partners.

CarePortal services would also be available as a current and much needed resource to assist with food insecurity from the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. Additional DCFS staff would have ongoing access and support from CarePortal and its partners, providing resources that enhance family engagement, support child safety, permanency and well-being with tangible resources, and increased access to community-based support that build protective factors for children and families.

The Global Orphan Project has emphasized their commitment to serving children and families in Los Angeles County. They will continue to pursue public-private funding opportunities to support its operation of CarePortal in Los Angeles County following the two-year term DCFS can fund using SBG dollars. CarePortal is a critical resource for our children and families, promoting prevention efforts while supporting our children in case and our DCFS employees.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

1. Execute a funding agreement (Agreement) with Southern California Grant Makers (SCG) and provide \$1,715,500, for a two-year Agreement with The Global Orphan Project, Inc., to expand the CarePortal program into all eight SPAs to address the needs of youth and families in crisis;

2. Delegate authority to the Director of DCFS, or his Designee, to execute extensions to the Agreement, contingent upon:
 - a. availability of funding;
 - b. approval by County Counsel; and
 - c. the Director of DCFS, or his Designee, notifies the Board and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in writing within ten (10) days of execution.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of DCFS, or his Designee, to execute amendments to increase or decrease the maximum funding agreement amount by no more than ten (10) percent during the term of the funding agreement to accommodate the increases or decreases in services, provided;
 - a. sufficient funding is available for increases;
 - b. approval by County Counsel is obtained; and
 - c. the Director of DCFS, or his Designee, or notifies the Board and the CEO in writing within ten (10) days of execution of amendment.
4. Provide quarterly written progress report-backs to the Board, including information on number of total requests met by CarePortal, number of children, youth and families (including kin, resource, and biological) served, number of food requests, requests by DCFS office and Supervisorial District, and estimated dollar amount of goods and services donated, along with any other outcomes.

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